

Festival plans steaming ahead

PLANS for Stroud's biggest community event for decades are steaming ahead and organisers expect a bumper Autumn theatre festival in the town.

Up to 1000 people are expected to take part in the Community Play which will be watched by 7,000 residents in the Stratford Park Leisure Centre in October.

A group of 20 voluntary researchers are now studying the town's history and discussing the script with former RADA playwright Jane Buckler. Another 180 people have volunteered their services.

A series of training sessions beginning next month will get actors, set builders, designers and other participants ready for the event.

“It needs to be a play for the whole community”

— Camilla Hale

Another group is preparing plans to raise £5,000 to finance the extravaganza.

“It needs to be a play for the whole community. That might take some work but I'm keen to talk to groups of people like unions, WI's, schools etc to get them involved,” said co-ordinator Camilla Hale.

The play is part of a 10-year-old movement which has seen community plays performed in many West Country towns.

The main hall of the Stratford Park Leisure Centre will be closed for a fortnight while the play is performed and preparations are made.

The play sprung from an initiative by Stroud's touring theatre company Dr Foster's and has been backed by the District Council.