



**A Guide for Street Theatre Performers
attending the
Abbey Medieval Festival**



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The Abbey Medieval Festival

The Abbey Medieval Tournament was first hosted in 1989 as a fundraiser for the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, one of Australia's premier collections of European and Classical fine arts and antiquities. Starting off as a one day event, the Festival has grown to become a major event attracting many thousands of people annually. In 2012, the Festival drew a crowd of nearly 30,000 visitors and participants.

The Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology

28 Festivals later, the Abbey Medieval Festival continues to raise funds for the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, to maintain and care for its remarkable collection that showcases the history of human endeavour and creativity. The Medieval Festival also helps the Museum fulfil its mission to provide quality cultural and educational experiences, and promote an impartial view of world history.

The Board of the Abbey Museum recognises that the success and growth of this Festival is thanks to the involvement and ongoing commitment of those who are dedicated to providing an authentic historical event. A Festival that is not only a cultural and educational event of an extremely high standard but also a great experience for attendees.

It is our ultimate goal that visitors should leave the Festival feeling as though they have experienced a realistic portrayal of medieval life.

Time period

The Abbey Medieval Festival has a specific time period and only accepts performances that recreate and represent the cultures of Europe and the Middle East between 600 and 1600AD.

Festival events

The Abbey Medieval Festival runs over the winter/mid-year school holidays and consists of the following events:

Medieval Banquets

The Banquet is a ticketed event where patrons enjoy a medieval feast whilst being entertained with music, dance and theatre. It is hosted twice on the two Saturdays before the main Festival weekend.

Kids Dig It! Medieval Family Fun

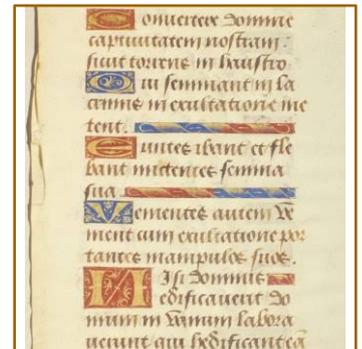
Typically hosted on the first week of the school holidays, the Medieval Family Fun week focuses on providing family friendly activities to teach kids about life during the medieval era.

Medieval Tournament

The Festival calendar culminates in a weekend Medieval Tournament where patrons can enjoy a wide range of activities from jousting to battles, medieval dancing and music, and wander through the living history encampments.

Street Theatre performers at the Abbey Medieval Festival

Street Theatre performers are an integral part of the Abbey Medieval Festival. Their contribution to the Festival atmosphere has been a crucial component in the Festival over the years. Performers interested in participating in the Abbey Medieval Festival are required to meet the standards and level of authenticity set by the Abbey Medieval Festival Committee. The Festival Committee acknowledges that not all performers are historians or medieval



Book of hours, Paris: Medieval manuscript from the Abbey Museum's collection

enthusiasts; therefore the basic standards are outlined in this document, focusing on costuming and performance. The Program and Performance team will also be able to assist performers prepare for the event. Issues or concerns that may arise in regards to group's authenticity will be discussed with the group directly.

Program and Performance team

The Program and Performance portfolio within the Festival Committee develops the program, manages the performers and the venues they perform in. The team includes the Program and Performance Coordinator who is responsible for managing re-enactment groups' involvement and includes being their first point of contact. The Street Theatre Coordinator works closely with the Program and Performance Coordinator to develop the Street Theatre side of the program and is the first point of contact for Street Theatre performers. The Program and Performance Venue Coordinator manages the 7 performance venues and is the first point of contact for Program and Performance volunteers over the weekend.

Applying to participate in the Abbey Medieval Festival

Each year, Street Theatre performers interested in participating in the Abbey Medieval Festival are required to submit an online application detailing the performances they wish to offer and a quote for their services.

The Program and Performance team will assess applications, focusing on what they are offering by way of program items and patron experience. Previous performance at the Festival will also be taken into consideration, such as the performers conduct with the Festival Committee and the public, and any authenticity concerns.

Unsuccessful performers

If an application is unsuccessful, the Program and Performance team will provide feedback regarding their decision. While it would be great to have all performers who apply attend the Festival, it is a not-for-profit event which operates on a limited budget which means not all performers may be accepted. The decision for a performer not to attend can be based on the Festival's historical context and standards, visitor interaction feedback, and performances offered.

New performers

Performers who have not attended the Festival before are required to send photos of their group, equipment and costumes for the Program and performance Committee to review.

Submitting performances

Street Theatre performers contribute to the Festival program and overall ambience during the Festival. Performance offers can be made as part of the Street Theatre application form which will be reviewed by the Program and Performance team when creating the Festival program.

As it is with all aspects of the Festival, authenticity is key. However, the Abbey Medieval Festival Committee reserves the right to accept or reject street theatre or musicians based on merit or previous bookings.

Performance offers for Street Theatre performers are typically split into 2 categories—venue performances and wandering performances.

Venue performances

The Festival has 7 performing venues in the Festival program, they are:



- Castle Arena
- Joust Arena
- The Common
- Village Green
- University Pavilion
- Friars Folly Tavern
- Pageant Wagon Stage

These venues feature re-enactment performers, jousters and Street Theatre performers. The Program and Performance team will assign performances to the appropriate venue, taking into account the scale of the performance, amount of performers, nature (e.g. juggling, dancing) and duration.

Wandering performances

Street Theatre performers and Re-enactment performers both add to the atmosphere of Abbeystowe through wandering entertainment. Wandering entertainment happens at the Festival gates in the morning as the public arrive, and around the grounds throughout the day.

Preparing to attend the Abbey Medieval Festival

Street Theatre performers who have been accepted to attend the Abbey Medieval Festival must provide all required information and documentation by the set deadlines.

The Street Theatre Coordinator is the main point of contact for Street Theatre performers; they will work closely with performers to get them prepared for the Festival.

Each Street Theatre group attending the Festival **must** nominate at least 1 primary contact. This person will act as the liaison point for the Street Theatre Coordinator, is responsible for disseminating information to the group about the Festival, and submitting all required information.

The administrative process

Performers who have been accepted to attend the Abbey Medieval Festival will be provided with detailed



information regarding the documentation required in the lead up to the festival. This list includes:

- Certificate of currency of insurance
- Signed contract
- Event Risk Assessment Tool (ERAT)
- Attendee list and accompanying declaration

Certificate of currency of insurance

Proof of this must be provided by all performers to show that you have adequate public liability cover. A copy of this can be uploaded to the application form. If the cover lapses before the Festival, an updated copy must be provided.

Signed contract and code of conduct

Once the program has been drafted, contracts including a code of conduct will be sent out to all performers to 'lock in' their participation at the Festival. Signed copies must be provided by the due date.

Event Risk Assessment Tool (ERAT)

All performers must provide a completed ERAT for the Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager to review.

Attendee list

All performers are required to provide an attendee list by the due date. A formal letter from the insurance holder/group leader must be provided stating that all members on the provided list are officially registered with the group.

Communication

Communication between the Street Theatre Coordinator will largely be conducted by email so it's important to ensure your primary contact can maintain decent access to emails.

A private Facebook group has also been set up for communication—Abbey Program, Performance and Coordination. Each group is allowed to nominate 2 representatives for this page and it's requested that the conversation be focused on the Abbey Medieval Festival.

Meetings with Street Theatre performers

Performers are also welcome to request meetings with the Program and Performance team and other members of the Festival Committee in the lead up to the event to discuss any concerns they may have, or to simply touch base.

A final meeting and safety briefing will be held the Friday afternoon/evening prior to the Festival weekend at Abbeystowe. This will give performers and the Festival Committee the opportunity to ask questions and clarify information ahead of the event.

Expectation of Street Theatre performers participating

The Abbey Medieval Festival is a large event, and the Program and Performance team who look after Street Theatre performers and performers are all volunteers. It is expected that Street Theatre performers participating at the Festival do all within their capacity to remain open and communicative with the Program and Performance team.

This includes:

- disseminating important information to their group
- meeting the deadlines as required
- responding to correspondence in a timely manner where required.

We do acknowledge that, like the coordinating team, Street Theatre performers have an array of commitments outside of the Abbey Medieval Festival. If situations arise where performers are struggling with preparing for the Festival, it is expected that they contact the Street Theatre Coordinator to work out arrangements.

The road to Abbeystowe—Festival set-up

Festival set-up and bump in is a hectic time for the Festival Committee, volunteers, re-enactment performers, Street Theatre performers, stallholders and the Abbey community. The Abbey Medieval Festival is hosted on private property; set up for the event has a staggered start with infrastructure installation beginning a few weeks before the main weekend.

Safety preparations

As outlined previously, each Street Theatre group attending the Abbey Medieval Festival is required to submit a complete Event Risk Assessment Tool for the Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager to review and endorse. This is more than just a document on the 'to-do' list; it is a plan specific to the group and it must be followed to mitigate risk during the event. Street performers must also familiarise themselves with incident reporting procedures and location of the first aid stations.



Fire safety supplies in performances

All Street Theatre performers working with fire in their performance /s must ensure their ERAT details the measures they are taking to mitigate risks; this may include having access to a fire extinguisher in appropriate working order.

Arriving for set up

Street Theatre Group's may start arriving on the Friday before the Festival weekend if they are registered as camping with a re-enactment group or have been approved for non-period camping.

Parking and vehicle usage

ALL VEHICLES ON SITE MUST HAVE A DASHBOARD SIGN. All vehicles on or around the site (stallholder and re-enactor car parks, Museum, etc.) must have a dashboard sign complete with their details on display at all times. This allows us to be able to contact you in the event of an emergency or to move your vehicle. These signs are made available prior to the event and must be distributed to all group members planning to have their vehicle onsite.



Sample dashboard sign

DO NOT DRIVE ACROSS THE ABBEYSTOWE FIELD. The ring road around the Festival site is one-way and has a speed limit of 10km/h. This has been put in place to ensure everyone's safety on Abbeystowe. Anyone found to be breaching these rules will have their details reported to the Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager.

Sign-in and medallions

Attendee lists

Only the names provided on a performer's attendee list will be permitted to the Festival site as a Street Theatre Performer so long as they are insured. If a performer is not on the list, or they have not paid their insurance on time, they **will not be permitted** to enter the Festival site as a performer and will be excluded from all performance activities. They will have to purchase a ticket and come as a patron. There are no exceptions to this rule. Anyone caught breaking this rule will be reported to the Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager.



Signing in and medallions

Street Theatre performers are all required to sign-in individually with the Program and Performance or bump-in team upon arrival. If they arrive overnight, they must see a member of this team first thing the next day. When signing in, performers will be given their medallion.

Medallions are unique identifiers given to re-enactors and Street Theatre performers to show that they have been officially 'signed in'

and are not a member of the public; it must be displayed when entering the site from the Friday before the weekend, and when requested by security, public safety and Festival volunteers. If a performer does not present their medallion when requested, they may be expelled from the Abbeystowe site. The same rules apply to all stallholders, re-enactors and volunteers (with wristbands).

The main event

Before the gates open

Parking

The road to Abbeystowe is a hive of activity from the wee hours of Saturday morning with volunteers, contractors, stallholders, re-enactors and performers arriving to make final preparations before gates open. We also have loyal patrons coming to line up as early as 7:30am.

Access to the Festival site from Old Toorbul Point Road will **close at 7:30am** on Saturday and Sunday mornings. This is to allow bump-in crew time to process everyone arriving so all cars can be off-site and parked by 8am. Street Theatre performers who do not need to move their vehicles until after the public leave can park their cars in the stallholder car park. All Street Theatre performers who arrive after 7:30am, or who may need to leave before the Festival closes will have to park in the public car parks. Further details on parking including where 'staff' parking is located will be provided.



Code of conduct

All Street Theatre performers participating at the Abbey Medieval Festival are expected to follow a Code of Conduct to ensure the safety and reputation of their group, the Festival and Abbey Museum. Penalties may be applied should it be breached; in particular, an individual performer or group may be ejected from the Festival by the Public Safety, Operations and Risk manager, or have their remuneration docked.

This Code encompasses any dealing with the Festival Committee, Festival volunteers and stakeholders, Festival patrons, re-enactment performers and other Street Theatre performers. The Code of Conduct will be sent to performers as part of their contract package.

Security, safety and risk

All performers and participants must abide by the lawful directions of the Abbey Museum staff and its appointed officers. The Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager is the final arbiter for all health and safety matters, failure to follow instructions could result in the expulsion from Abbeystowe.

Injuries and incidents

All incidents must be reported to the Public Safety team so an incident report can be completed. We understand that due to the large scale and busy nature of the Festival, not all incidents can be reported to a member of the Public Safety and Security Team. In the event where a member of these teams is inaccessible, the Public Safety Hotline (1300 660 398) can be used.

First aid

All participants should know where the First Aid stations are situated—a site map is provided to group commanders/contacts with their contract and again closer to the event. We also recommend that performers inform someone of any medical conditions they may have, i.e. diabetes, asthma, allergies, etc. Performing groups can nominate a member within the group, for solo performers we recommend advising the Program and Performance team.

Above all else

All participants at the Festival must follow the rules and directions of the Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager, or their designee.

Performers need to remember that safety comes before authenticity. It is illegal for performers to allow the public to handle certain categories of weapons or involve them in any hazardous activity. It is also illegal to allow them to sample or purchase food or drink without the proper permits.

Equipment

Some equipment may be key for your performance, but it does not fit in with the period.

Modern items to be avoided in performances at the Abbey Medieval Festival:

Problem	Solution
Modern music stands and instrument cases	A simple pillowcase or large shawl can cover up a modern music stand. These are best to be in a plain colour. Cases can be stored in the designated green room while doing wandering performances or backstage while performing in the Friar's Folly Tavern.
Watches and mobile phones	A discreet pocket inside your clothing or a cloth/leather pouch attached to your belt are easy ways to hide your watch or mobile while you're out and about.
Modern jewellery and hair accessories	Simply keeping these hidden under your costume is perfect! Large modern fascinators are not appropriate, but single flowers or a flower garland (made of either real or fake flowers) are great options.

Costuming



There is no such thing as generic medieval clothing just as much as there is no such thing as a generic modern car. Everything is specific to its location, time and use so clothing accessories and equipment from different time periods should not be mixed. Never rely on the catch cry "the public don't know the difference" because all too often they do, and ultimately it reflects badly on the Festival, the Museum and your troupe.

Accurate period costuming makes one of the greatest visual contributions to the overall ambience of the event. Individuals may be requested to change or remove blatantly non-authentic garments during public hours. This includes, but is not limited to, modern hats, sunglasses, modern shoes and wristwatches.

As previously mentioned, new Street Theatre performers will need to send through details of costumes. If necessary the Abbey Museum is happy to recommend sources for costumes or costume patterns.

Colours

Performers usually only wore bright colours but never wore purple as it was reserved only for royalty.

Wool and linen

Wool and linen were the foundation of most medieval wardrobes. Pure wool fabrics are still available today; however, wool and polyester blends are much cheaper and can look just as good.

Linen, canvas and cotton

Try: Blends of linen and viscose as they can look and feel like pure linen.

Note: cotton blends are not useful as they are too shiny.

Fur

Fur was commonly used as a warm lining or trims for outer garments such as surcoats, gowns, cloaks and head-wear. Avoid cheaper fur fabrics intended for stuffed toys.

Try: A cheaper option is to buy second-hand fur coats from charity shops. Realistic acrylic fur fabrics are available as well. Coat quality fabric can be purchased by the metre.

Materials to avoid:

- Any knitted fabrics
- Shiny synthetics in place of silk
- Poly/cotton and poly/viscose
- Printed textiles
- Lurex metallic fabrics
- Furnishing textiles
- Any textiles with big lumps in the spinning



Crushed velvet

While many 'medieval' style costumes these days are made from crushed velvet, it did **not** actually exist in the Middle Ages. It is often used because it is cheap (both in price and in look) alternative to proper velvet. Crushed velvet should **not** be used for any aspect of your medieval costume.

Headwear



For most cultures, headwear was an important part of their clothing. In some societies, women were required to have their hair fully covered or dressed appropriately. Please be aware if you are representing a time period where this is the case, make sure you look at the types of hats, veils and headscarfs appropriate to that time period.

Quick Fix: A veil or head covering can be made from a large scrap of linen or wool. Wide brim straw hats can be purchased from many places - remove the coloured band, and voila!

Footwear

Footwear is one of the hardest aspects of clothing to get correct. Chunky motorcycle boots, army boots, runners or kung-fu shoes are not the best options. **Please do not wrap your feet or shoes in hessian.**

Quick Fix: Plain black or brown slouch boots work well.



Accessories

Please ensure that accessories are appropriate to your time period.

Please hide inappropriate visible body piercings, tattoos, and hair styles or colour where possible. If you display them while depicting a 10th century Troubadour or a 14th juggler; then it becomes an authenticity issue. To put it simply—if it is not right, remove it or cover it up.

Modern items not appropriate when performing at the Abbey Medieval Festival

- Watches and sunglasses
- Modern shoes
- Modern caps and hats
- Inappropriate fabrics and colours, i.e. fluorescent colours or purple crushed velvet
- Inappropriate jewellery for your specific period

- Inappropriate visible body piercings for your specific period.

Remember! Performers are 'on show' to the public and should follow the appropriate costuming guidelines at all times when they are performing.

Green Rooms

Green rooms are provided for all Street Theatre performers and performers to make use of during the Festival. Green Rooms are strictly for use by Street Theatre performers only. All performers will be provided with information regarding the location of these green rooms ahead of time.

Toilets and showers

A toilet and shower block is available for use on site, access to these facilities is a privilege and it is expected that users keep this area tidy. The soap and toilet paper within these blocks are not to be removed; any performer caught stealing these facilities will be reported to the Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager.

A donation box is placed in the shower block. Donations are greatly appreciated as they contribute to the upkeep of these facilities.

Smoking

Dedicated smoking zones (DOSAs) are allocated and will be marked on the map (delineated with blue tape and signage). There is to be no smoking in other areas.

Above all else...

Have fun!

The Festival Committee recognise the dedication and hard work that is put into each performers' attendance at our event, and while the Festival can be an exhausting undertaking—we want performers to enjoy themselves.

After the event

Pack-up

Performers who are camping are welcome to stay on Sunday night to pack up their encampment on Monday. We ask that performers be off-site by 12 noon.

Green Room and Camping Cleaning up

It is not the responsibility of the Abbey Medieval Festival volunteers to clean up after Street Theatre performers. Please ensure bottles go into the skips, not the standard rubbish bins. Volunteers are required to empty these bins and if they are full of bottles they can be too heavy to move. Street Theatre performers are expected to leave the site as they found it, i.e. rubbish, etc.

Festival debrief

Street Theatre survey

A survey is also distributed for performers to complete post-Festival. This is a chance for Street Theatre performers to raise issues, concerns, successes, learnings, etc. with the Festival Committee and vice versa. All Street Theatre performers who attended the Festival are encouraged to have their say, feedback can be submitted anonymously.



Invoicing

The final administrative task for the Festival calendar is invoicing. All performers with contracted financial agreements with the Festival Committee are required to submit an invoice no later than 30 September in the same year.

Contacts

Street Theatre Coordinator—Callan Linde

The Street Theatre Coordinator works closely with the Program and Performance Coordinator to develop the Street Theatre side of the program and is the first point of contact for Street Theatre performers.

Email: calashlinde@gmail.com

Program and Performance Coordinator—Megan Gansberg

The Program and Performance Coordinator heads up the team that writes the program, manages the performers who deliver the program and the venues they perform in. Megan is first and central point of contact for all re-enactment performers participating at the Festival.

Email: megansberg@hotmail.com

Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager—Andrew Murray

The Public Safety, Operations and Risk Manager does many things to ensure our Festival is compliant with all manner of legislations. From the Street Theatre perspective, Andrew may work with performers on developing their Event Risk Assessment Tool, and consult with performers looking to develop anything 'out of the box' in terms of performance, encampment, etc. in the lead up to the Festival. Andrew and his team will deal with any safety or security issues that arise during the event itself.

Festival Management Team

Event Manager—Pam Cuffe

Festival Director—Edith Cuffe

The Festival Committee is headed up by the Event Manager, who oversees the operational components of the Committee and reports to the Festival Director. Pam and Edie may attend important meetings with Street Theatre performers and send the occasional communication; however most dealings with the Festival Committee will be conducted via the Program and Performance team.