

A Billingham International Festival of World Dance photo-call item:

WORLD CUP AND FESTIVAL FEVER GRIPS BILLINGHAM

This week sees the start of the World Cup - when everyone will be tuned in to their television set to celebrate their love for the beautiful game. Football is such a universal sport that appeals to a great deal of people from a variety of different countries.

This connection is much like the ambiance created year-upon-year by the *Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance* [9-16 August] that in 2014 reaches its 50th birthday.

The widespread passion for football and world dance has reached Billingham in Tees Valley, where players from Billingham Town Football Club joined forces with young dancers from Billingham-based 'Tapshoes and Tutus' and recent graduates from Teesside University's School of Arts & Media to drum up some Festival Fever.

Between 9th and 16th August the *Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance* will be welcoming artistes from Chile, Cook Islands, Georgia, Italy, Ireland, Mexico, North Cyprus, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Thailand and from across the UK.

The Brazilian connections will be upheld by the ELEMENTS ARTS COMPANY who will be providing some amazing Latin American and Brazilian contemporary dance during the Festival.

There will be a host of free and paid for events spread across various venues including BILLINGHAM - Billingham Town Centre, The Forum Theatre, The Bandstand, The Ramp, St Aiden's Church Hall and John Whitehead Park; MIDDLESBROUGH - The Empire Theatre, The Crypt, mima and Middlesbrough Theatre; and NEWCASTLE - Dance City.

Olga Maloney, Artistic Director for the Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance, said: "We are really excited with how our preparations are going as the Festival is now only two months away. The event programme promises to be bigger and better than ever before, as performers will be bringing an extra special international flavour to Tees Valley.

"There's music, dance theatre, workshops, street parades and concerts, all aimed at providing the ultimate Festival experience. It's always wonderful to see so many nationalities represented throughout the Festival, as it makes for a superb cultural extravaganza."

Darren Trotter, the manager of Billingham Town FC who currently play in the Northern Football League Division One, said: "Each year the Billingham International Folklore Festival really brings the Town to life and provides a great feel good factor. Both the Festival and our football team play an important role in the local community as people enjoy actively engaging with these cultural and sporting elements in Billingham.

"Having the World Cup and Billingham International Folklore Festival taking place over the next couple of months will be great fun and something to really look forward to!"

Everything you will ever need to know about *Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance* can be found at www.billinghamfestival.co.uk

This website contains the Festival programme in full, information about the artists and performers, and it even contains an archive of material covering the last five decades. People can also contact the team by calling 01642 553 220 or by emailing info@billinghamfestival.co.uk

The Festival enjoys support from Arts Council England's Grants for the arts programme, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

You can get up to date information from our Face Book and Twitter pages www.facebook.com/billinghamworlddancefestival and @BillFest

People can follow the fortunes of Billingham Town FC by visiting www.billinghamtownfc.net

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