

Rebuilding Christchurch

one brick, one word, one city

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FESTA round-up

October 28, 2013 //

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Last night, the wind dropped off enough for the Canterbury Tales procession of FESTA to go ahead. It was a fantastic display of creativity, ingenuity and organization, and one of the most uplifting weekends that Christchurch has seen since, well, the last FESTA in 2012. The carnivalesque procession went from the Bridge of Remembrance to Cathedral Square, and while that might not

seem like a long walk, as the puppets and floats meandered along, the two hours flew by. In the small park at the Worcester St bridge, Bruce Russell (above) wailed on his guitar, whilst a barely-clad woman was suspended above the plinth that used to support the statue of Robert Falcon Scott – given her lack of clothes, she was probably about as cold as the Captain.



Free Theatre came up with the idea of using Chaucer, and it was a great premise. The Knight, at the head of the parade, was constructed out of old bicycles. Sitting atop his steed, Ryan Reynolds, of Gap Filler and UC fame, provided a wry commentary on the building sites along the parade route. Further back in the procession, the Scholar (above) was piloted by Free Theatre's George Parker, who engaged with the crowd and the other floats as they made their way down the road.



While the big puppets were fixed on floats, there were a number of (slightly) smaller characters, such as the six friars (above and below). These were far more mobile, able to run off the route and through the crowd. When the procession reached the food tents at the corner of Worcester and Oxford, many of the friars ran off to try and get something to eat. Gerry was heard asking for chips on a number of

occasions. While the real Gerry was no-where to be seen, the city's new Mayor was in and around the march, clearly having a great time, posing for photos with puppets. It may still be early days, but it is so refreshing to see our leaders out and about, enjoying themselves with the public – it is such a contrast to the past 3 years.



Of course, FESTA wasn't just Canterbury Tales – but it was such a big effort that it is worth celebrating. Especially with the winds causing the cancellation of the Saturday show, there was just so much relief that the work that everyone had put in over the last year was able to be seen and enjoyed by all. On Friday, the “Urban Wanderings” also brought life back to the city centre. This year's event had a different feel than last year's Luxcity – but then, the city has a different feel to 2012. I can't wait to see what they come up with next year.

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