
PRESS RELEASE

Nell Gifford, founder of Gifford's Circus, to turn on Cirencester's Christmas Lights



Organisers of Cirencester's Advent Festival are delighted to announce that the Cotswolds' Nell Gifford, founder of Gifford's Circus, will be Cirencester's special guest this year to switch on the Christmas Lights.

Nell Gifford joined the circus when she was eighteen and fell instantly in love with this forgotten art form. She read English at New College Oxford and then joined the first circus that came to town. Since then she has worked on a number of shows in the UK before joining Circus Roncalli in Germany. This circus inspired Nell and her fiancé, Toti Gifford, a farmer's son from Cheltenham, to start their own circus, which they called Giffords Circus. The show first appeared at Hay on Wye arts festival in 2000 and has toured the South West ever since, entertaining up to 100,000 people a year and beloved of locals, farmers, rock stars, royalty and runaways everywhere!

Nell was awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the University of Gloucestershire In 2007 and was presented with the inaugural 'Maverick Award' in 2010 by the Groucho Club, London.

Bingham House, 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 2PP
Tel: 01285 655646/Fax: 01285 643843/Web: www.cirencester.gov.uk



She has published three books about circus life and history:

- 'Josser: The Secret Life of a Circus Girl'
- 'Who was...Philip Astley? A children's biography on the inventor of the circus'
- 'Gifford's Circus. The First Ten Years'.

Nell lives in the Cotswolds with her family and has been the executive producer of all seventeen Gifford's Circus shows and is a performer, horse trainer and designer.

The event, which is being organised by Cirencester Town Council's Advent Team, will take place on Saturday December 1st from 11.00am to 7.30pm. This will culminate with the traditional light switch-on ceremony from 6.30pm and a display by Cotswold Fireworks at 7.00pm.

Shops and businesses are being asked to enter into the spirit of the day with special themes, entertainment and special promotions.

Cirencester Market and Events Officer Sarah Bartlett, said: *"We've got some great traders, street food and drink caterers attending, plus fair rides for the children and Santa's Grotto at the Fleece Hotel. There will be live stage performances and some pop-up performances taking place throughout the town"*

Cllr Sabrina Poole, part of the organising team said *"I am delighted that we can celebrate the Cotswolds' very own circus talent on the 250th anniversary year of the modern Circus."*

The event relies heavily on community input, so we welcome volunteers from the local community to help make the day run as smoothly as possible.

Email info@cirencester.gov.uk for more information.

INFORMATION FOR EDITORS

Road Closures for the Market Place with effect from Midnight on November 30th to 9pm on December 1st

Cirencester Arts and Craft Market Sunday 2nd December 10am – 5pm

Cotswold Markets Christmas Gift Markets Monday 10th December 10am – 4pm/Tuesday 11th to Thursday 13th 10am - 5pm/Friday 14th 9am – 3pm

Cirencester Christmas Markets Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th December 10am – 5pm

Festive Farmers' Markets Saturday 8th & Saturday 22nd December 9am – 2.30pm

Bingham House, 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 2PP
Tel: 01285 655646/Fax: 01285 643843/Web: www.cirencester.gov.uk

