

Horns of Plenty so full of life

NICOLA LISLE
on the street
band that is —
in all likelihood
— coming to a
party near you

When Simon Chatterton was asked to help set up a street band for the Cowley Road Carnival, it was intended to be a six-week project. Five years and some 100 or so members later, Horns of Plenty is still going strong — and showing little sign of fading away.

"It's the kind of thing every town should have, really," says Simon, whose day job involves producing outdoor arts projects around the country.

"Before the days of television and iPods and personal stereos, bands would always be out and about and be part of whatever was happening, be they parties or weddings, so it's certainly not a new idea, and it's something that has caught on all over the world."

Being a part of whatever is happening certainly characterises Horns of Plenty, which can often be seen around Oxford at a huge range of events, from allotment parties and street parties to major festivals and carnivals, with a regular slot at the May Morning festivities.

Some of their most recent appearances have included Wolvercote Festival, the Roald Dahl Festival in Aylesbury, the Deans Ham Allotments party and Witney Carnival.

"It's the community aspect that I really like," says Jude Strutton, who has been with



■ **BLOWING THEIR OWN TRUMPETS:** Horns of Plenty, brightening up the streets of Oxford, above, and summer festivals and parties, below

the band since the beginning. "You find out about Oxford, and all these fabulous people doing incredible things, and it's a privilege to go and be part of that. It's about really understanding the community."

'Community' is a word that the musicians use a lot when talking about Horns of Plenty, and is clearly something that drives the band.

And it's not just the local community — the players enjoy linking up with other street bands and musicians from around the world.

"We always try to bring in musicians

from other towns or countries to run workshops for us," says Simon.

"We've had bands from places like Holland, France and Mexico teaching us

about the street music in their part of the world, because wherever you go there's that kind of tradition. So we've loved being able to connect with those bands from around the world. It's also very special being connected to a much wider world across the globe."

"I've been playing drums for about 50 years, and played in more bands than I care to confess, but it is such fun playing in this band because it's out there in the street. I'm loving being able to wander about, not hemmed in by a drum kit, and it's the most fun I've had."

The band's repertoire is eclectic, too, covering jazz, tango, West African music and much more.

"We play music from all over the world, and that's part of the fun too," says Dave.

Catch Horns of Plenty in action this summer at the Elder Stubbs and Cripsey Meadow allotment parties and Charlbury Street Fair. Full details at www.hornsofplenty.co.uk



Heroic Nakedness shows changes in the human body's depiction



The English language distinguishes between the terms 'naked' and 'nude'. Thus opens the latest exhibition at Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford: *Heroic Nakedness*, exploring the body through the eyes of Renaissance and Baroque artists, timed to coincide with and pay tribute to the Olympic Games, writes *Theresa Thompson*.

While 'naked' is perceived as the unclad figure, evoking a somewhat uncomfortable feeling of exposure where the natural state is regarded as

'dressed', 'nude', explains Jacqueline Thalmann, Curator of the Picture Gallery, "is the self-confident flaunt of the human form as nature intended and clothes are seen as an unnatural addition."

The exhibition does not strictly adhere to this, however; instead *Heroic Nakedness* captures the spirit of the drawings on display. It explores the changes in depiction of the naked human body, from the early almost timid artistic rediscovery of the human form when artists

were drawing more from imagination than observation, to later confident academic studies after life models.

It starts with an early 15th Century youth about to throw a ball — awkward and curiously long-limbed — and ends with studies from real life models, mostly male, like Agostino Carracci's powerful *A Warrior Subduing a Monster*, left, or possessing a quiet eroticism as in brother Annibale's *A Nude Youth, seated*, right, seen from the back.

Apart from the skinny youth throwing a ball, no figures do anything sporty. These works were more a celebration of the splendour and beauty of the human body.

If men were all action, gods and heroes inspired by Greek and Roman sculpture, showing off their muscles, women, if they were depicted at all, were languid, reclining, surrounded by admirers or putti. Female life models were unavailable, so statues of goddesses and nymphs stood in.

