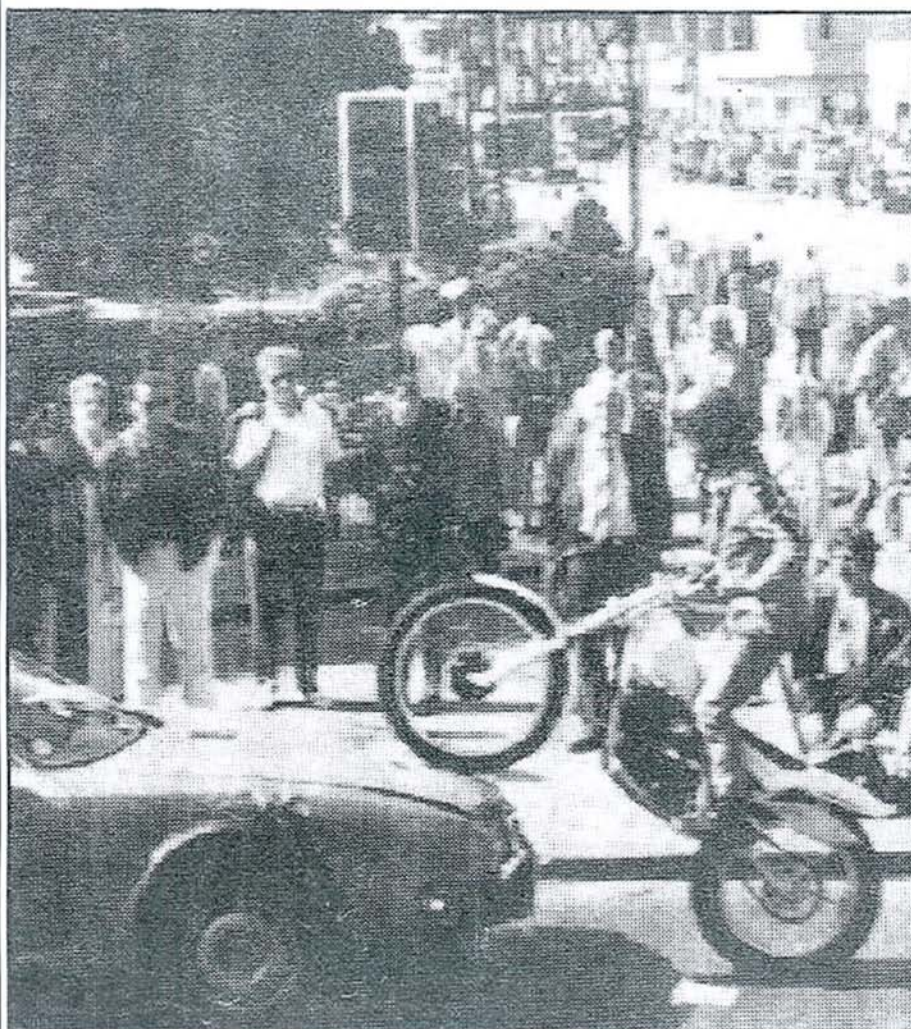


Circus daredevils cock a snook at the council



ONLOOKERS gasped with horror as a motorcyclist rode over the roof of a car in the middle of Edinburgh's crowded Princes Street yesterday.

It turned out to be a publicity stunt by a zany Festival fringe group cocking a snook at the safety authorities with whom they are already in trouble.

Now they could be racing into a head-on collision with the law.

The group are the Archaos Circus, who for three weeks are presenting a wild show at Leith Links.

Fourteen people from the show have been injured in the past year, the last of them a trapeze girl who plunged 30ft and damaged her spine only last week.

By BILL GREIG

Council officials have already ordered the circus to put up a safety barrier to protect spectators and yesterday were talking about applying for a court ban on the show if they are defied.

Negotiations over this were still going on when the risky stunt in Princes Street was staged.

Dangerous

Circus driver Stefan Dupont stopped his battered Citroen at traffic lights at the junction with The Mound.

Then the motorcyclist roared across Princes Street, mounted the car, sped over its roof, bounced down to the road, and raced away.

Police said: "We ought to have been told about

this before it was attempted."

Driver Dupont said: "The council want us to put up a barrier because they think there's a risk to the audience from the motorcycles.

"Normal circuses don't have barriers and they often have elephants.

"If an elephant went crazy it could kill people too!

"All life is dangerous and a show wouldn't be a show without a risk."

One of the group's stunts has already been quite firmly banned at the festival — their speciality which involves juggling with chain saws on the high-wire.

The circus also features "clowns" fighting with crowbars and during a recent performance one broke both arms when he mistimed a turn.