

A shocking good show

IF you go along to Archaos' circus expecting red-nosed clowns and jugglers sitting astride beautiful white horses, you're in for a shock.

With motorbike wheelies, chainsaw-juggling, welding torches and clouds of fluttering chicken feathers, Archaos are more like Hell's Angels than Billy Smart.

Injuries

It's not hard to understand why the unique anarchic troupe, who began a two-week run inside on Highbury Fields on Tuesday, attract attention wherever they go.

With a history littered with injuries, leather-clad vagabonds Archaos are always hitting the headlines.

Thirteen injuries were sustained performing in London last year, and in Edinburgh last month one member suffered a broken arm and crushed vertebrae during training.

But despite the danger to the highly-trained 55-strong troupe there's absolutely no danger to the audience whatsoever, they insist.

Director and founder Pierrot Pilot-Bidone explains: "The show



is not dangerous.

"There are some pieces that look dangerous, but that's because that's the impression they're supposed to give.

"We are highly-trained to be able

to do these shows and stunts. There is no danger to the audience at all."

It's a point they're keen to make after recent publicity.

Their shows on Highbury Fields

have gone ahead against a background of wrangles with Islington Council over fire safety and concerns about noise.

They follow their recent nightmare at the Edinburgh Festi-

where they were almost banned because of fears for the audience over the bike stunts and chainsaw juggling.

"We are always eagerly anticipated wherever we go," says Pierrot, "There are always press stories about us because we are so different.

Fireworks

"Sometimes things are made a bit difficult for us, but never as badly as they have been in Britain this year.

"We are happy to change the show slightly. But we don't like somebody coming from outside and telling us to make changes.

"If we need fireworks, we need fireworks. We plan to use them because they are part of the show.

"If we're told not to use them it's just not the same."

Archaos are also at pains to point out that there are always plenty of fire extinguishers around and plenty of ventilation to allow fumes to escape.

For their new production **The**

Last Show On Earth they've complemented their motorbike madness and chainsaw juggling with acrobatics, dance, music and lights.

● Archaos' spell at Highbury Fields ends on September 24. The shows start at 8.30pm and tickets cost £8 or £6.

● There are £4 concessions to Islington residents and those who turn up in motorbike helmet and leathers. Phone 700 0989.