

Choir Tour to Germany

Geoff Poad, President

On 14/15 April a group of 75 people returned to Exeter having taken part in a thoroughly rewarding Tour. We were thrilled with our 3 successful concerts and five days enjoying one another's company. The opportunity to socialise with members we don't normally have the chance to talk to was especially memorable.

Our first concert was in Heidelberg, but was so planned that we had 4 hours free time to explore this old and attractive city, sitting astride the River Neckar. We were applauded as we formed up in the Church of St Bonifatius and that was repeated throughout the concert. Our return to our Hotel base in Würzburg was very late but that did not prevent considerable business at the bar!!

We had somewhat longer to explore Fulda at leisure and we were given an excellent buffet tea by the folk at Fulda Cathedral before our concert. It was inspiring to be told that the audience had overspilled beyond the Quire area, so great were the numbers. They were even photocopying more programmes as we took to the stage!

The third day gave us time to visit the sights in Würzburg itself; a town devastated by Allied bombing in 1944/45 but now beautifully restored. The welcome of the audience in Würzburg was especially warm, with a long standing ovation at the end. Clearly it was an emotional evening for Würzburg residents as we were the first English choir to sing in St. Laurentius Church since the end of World War II.

The tour finished with a buffet dinner in the Hotel after the evening concert in Würzburg. An excellent meal, washed down with.....sparkling water!!!

The enduring memories?

- Excellent hotel
- Good hospitality
- Glorious sunshine
- 75 people enjoying themselves together
- Laughter/beer/wine
- Singing our hearts out with feeling and passion
- Warm welcome wherever we sang.
- The Director of Music speaking to all three audiences in German. (But oh dear! it went to his head in the end!!).



The German Tour

Andrew Millington, Director of Music

For me, the German Tour was most enjoyable for many reasons. As choir tours go in my experience, this one was pleasantly relaxing. I have led many tours involving young choristers, and having responsibility for groups of children in foreign lands is a stressful experience. I was confident that you could all cross the road safely, not talk to strangers, and behave after 'lights-out' (?). More seriously, though, it was a lovely few days- fabulous weather, super hotel, and a very nice opportunity to get to know members of the choir other than a passing remark on a Monday evening. Singing a varied programme in very different spaces and acoustics is a special challenge, and the choir rose to it extremely well. The performances became more musical and convincing as the tour progressed, and it was clear from the reaction that audiences were impressed with our singing. The spirit in the choir was terrific and there was a real sense of pulling together, so thank you all for that. It was a delight to have Andrew Downton with us, and we were very well served by his sympathetic and flexible approach on the organ.