

Tone's Tidings

May 2017

Special Issue



St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir
Patron: The Rt. Hon The Earl of Iveagh; President: Paul Deane
Vice Presidents: John Balaam, Dr John Meers and
The Very Reverend Dr Frances Ward
Registered Charity No. 1028123



A special edition of Tidings with some memories of the successful France '17 tour

The sky was blue, the sun shone and the Mistral made its presence known during our visit to Avignon and area from Monday 17 to Monday 24 April. Thank you all for a great time.



First view of Avignon (17 April)



This became our daily view of the Pont St Benezet

'For you to ponder on in a quiet moment' - answers to the quiz in your pocket day-to-day guide

1. Avignon stands at the confluence of two rivers, their names please. **Rhone and La Durance**
2. The Polymnimes take their name from a Greek Muse. What was her name and of what is she the Muse?
Polyhymnia, Muse of Sacred music
3. Pont Saint Esprit translates into what in English? **The bridge of the Holy Spirit**
4. Our Eurostar train terminates in Marseille, what is the name of the station? **Saint Charles**
5. What word added to Palais turns it into a dance? **Glide, ie the Palais Glide**
6. The Bermond tower in Uzes has three architectural orders, what are they? **Doric, Ionic and Corinthian**
7. In France there are many avenues and boulevards named after Frederick Mistral, who and what was he? **A writer and lexicographer of the Occitan language, hence Languedoc**
8. If we were singing in St Stephens Church, where would we be singing? **St Etiennes, Uzes**
9. Who was Emperor when the Romans built the Theatre Antique d'Orange? **Emperor Augustus**
10. Which Saint gives his name to the Pont d'Avignon.
St Benezet
11. What is the name of the Museum of sweets just outside Uzes. **Haribo**
12. How long did it take to build Eglise St Paul in Nimes?
14 years
13. There are many galleries and museums in Avignon, how many did you visit? **Only you know the answer**
14. What is your duty free allowance on Eurostar? **Nil**
15. Why am I doing this when I could be relaxing with a glass of something suitably refreshing? **I could not agree more, "More wine garcon s'il vous plait!"**

Most of the 77 travellers, outside St Paul's, Nimes (18 April)



The four concert venues:



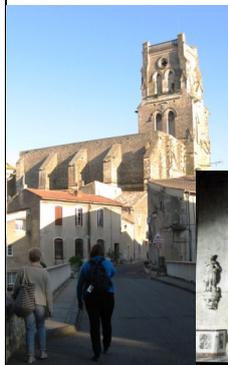
St Paul's, Nimes (18 April)



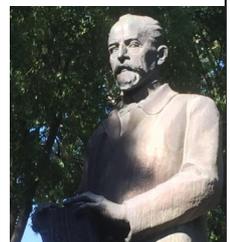
St Etienne's, Uzes with Les Canards Sauvages, (19 April)



St Didier's, Avignon (21 April)



St Saturnin's, Pont St Esprit (22 April)



Life in the Place de l'Horloge (Clock Tower Square), Avignon





Notes from a small page turner

According to the conventions of page turning, the performer (Calvin) should have his right side facing the audience. Thus, the page turner (me) should be seated at his left side ready to discreetly rise and silently and seamlessly turn the right number of pages in the right direction at the right time. Easy! In the real world we have cold, dark churches, the Mistral, Mr Blobby, Mark, and Angels.

Regardless of convention I always ask Calvin which side he would like me to sit and accept his choice gracefully. It was not until Uzes that it clicked! In the slight pause before announcing his decision Cal is actually assessing the direction of the prevailing winds and positioning me so as to shield him from the worst of the icy draughts! This has implications! For instance I spent considerable time in the Uzes concert preventing the pages from involuntary turning at random as successive gusts of the Mistral blasted their way across the keyboard.

So having established which side to sit, I then have to position myself close enough to the piano to see the music but without compromising Calvin's arm movements. Much as I love Calvin, for the sake of propriety I do try to avoid physical contact with him. (I'm on medication which means I bruise easily.)

This is easier said than done in some of the more compact venues. Convention advises turning pages from the top (which disadvantages those of us on the short side). The pianist will always turn from the bottom which is why the bottom corners are folded over. These folds do not help when turning from the top.



It may not be widely appreciated by the audience but all music scripts have their own idiosyncrasies. Some music lends itself to turning easily. In other pieces the pages cling together desperately resisting the attempts of my numb fingers to prize them apart. Some pages once parted can spend the rest of the piece trying to reunite and it requires my best efforts to ensure that they don't. Whipping the piece off the piano and bending the spine forcefully backwards is not an option. Some pieces vehemently resent my attempts to turn them from the top preferring to be handled from the bottom. This can lead to an interesting scenario for Calvin who suddenly finds himself with an extra hand he's not sure what to do with. Occasionally other prominent parts of my body make contact with Calvin's hand when he decides to throw in the odd glissando just as I am leaning in to turn the page. The art of propping up a single sheet of dog-eared A4 also present challenges as there's very little of substance to keep it upright and being but a single sheet is highly susceptible to passing draughts. An example of this is *Steal Away* which seems to think its mission in life is to act out its title.

Then we come to *Angels*. Whatever motivates someone to compose a piece which goes something like this: straight through to the end of bar 43 at the top of page 9, back to bar 19 at the top of page 4 then up to bar 28 halfway down page 6, miss out pages 7, 8 and a bit of page 9, skip to bar 44 halfway down page 9, up to bar 53 on page 11 back to bar 46 (I think this is where Calvin goes awol but I'm not entirely sure) miss out bar 52 and 53 on page 11, skip to bar 54 and then straight through to the end. Hallelujah! Oh no, sorry, that's a different song!

Dates for your Diary

Su 21 May – Concert with Amersfoort MVC from Holland, St Peter and St Paul Church, Clare CO10 8NY

Sa 3 June – King's Lynn MVC 60th Anniversary Mass Choir, St Nicholas Chapel, King's Lynn PE301NH

Sa 17 June – Woolpit Festival with Lights Music Action

Sa 8 July – St Mary's Church, Redgrave, Diss IP22 1RJ

Sa 30 September – Concert at St Mary's Church, Stratford St Mary CO7 6LS in aid of church funds

Sa 14 October - Three Choirs Festival with The Dalesmen MVC and Mansfield and District MVC, Derby Cathedral Centre, 18-19 Iron Gate, Derby DE1 3GP

Sa 18 November - Concert with Leigh Orpheus MVC, St Peter's Church, Sudbury CO10 2EA, in aid of RAFA

Notes from a small page turner continued

When researching the art of page turning I was reassured to learn that it is acceptable to receive a nod from the pianist when they think that they can remember the rest of the page and it's OK to turn. I just have to work out whether Calvin is nodding specifically to me or just losing himself in the rhythm of the music. As well as 'the nod', and just to be on the safe side I use additional techniques; a combination of following the words and occasionally the music. For absolute fail safe assurance I also try following a section of the choir. The word option is not always a particularly satisfactory technique as in some pieces some words are repeated ad nauseam, and I lose count: following the music is difficult if Calvin decides to make it up as he goes and very occasionally the section I'm following goes just a tiny, tiny bit wrong! If there is a catastrophic failure of all these safeguards an emphatically hissed 'NOW' from Calvin usually does the trick.

After the experiences of Nimes and Uzes I resorted to buying an additional jumper. Choosing clothing for page turning is not straightforward! Black, of course, to be discreet...no revealing décolletage, no buttons to clatter against the piano and definitely no batwing sleeves as these have previously proved to be extremely effective in limiting the vision of the pianist. I have to wear sufficient clothing to prevent shivering but not so much clothing so as to restrict movement of the limbs. In Pont St. Esprit, alas, it became apparent that the additional jumper was insufficient to preserve life and I began to develop symptoms of hypothermia. As Calvin also complained of feeling extremely cold, between sets we huddled together in the North transept and at that point I decided the 'no physical contact' rule doesn't apply away from the keyboard!

Technology also impacts the life of a page turner. Mark has his iPad. I have my iPhone. Mark has a music app on his iPad. I have a torch app on my iPhone. Mark conducts music from the app on his iPad. I conduct gents to closets with the app on my iPhone. Remember Uzes anyone? This Little Light of Mine will never have the same meaning ever again.

I hope this sheds some light on some aspects of the 'art' of page turning for those who have expressed an interest. Of course none of this would be possible without the skills and patience of Calvin and Mark to whom I express thanks and gratitude for letting me anywhere near them.

Sylvia 'Page-Turner' Wilson



'Kedington' relaxes



Never missing an opportunity to entertain!



Calvin

Avignon TGV Station (24 April)

Little did we know what lay ahead!!!

For more pictures go to www.semvc.com. From the Menu select Our Concerts/Gallery/French Tour

Reports and pictures for Tidings are welcome. Please contact Chairman Tony Farr, 01440 704179, lolandtony@talktalk.net