



From Baritone 'Fred' Spoun

I handed Rob my music folder a few days ago and as he was preparing a newsletter, asked him to mention my appreciation of being a member of such a friendly choir. I will take with me a huge repertoire of songs and fond memories of trips and events

over the best part of 20 years. I have also appreciated the tolerance shown to me by Mark for being a part-time member being nearly half the year abroad.

I am not sure how much I should reveal about myself but I was born as Friedrich von Spaun in Linz, Austria in 1940 but later in life hated the emphasis on the 'von' and changed my name to Spoun as it sounded slightly better than Spaun. My father wanted to keep up the musical traditions of the family and hated the brutality of the Nazi regime – refused a commission and was punished by being sent to the Russian front. He survived and found France a holiday in comparison, only to be killed by Italian partisans near Montecasino a year later. We were evacuated to an Alpine village in Styria and saw the 'Ami' arrive throwing sweets at the children from their tanks. My favourite Christmas present was a hand-made snow shovel with which I hollowed out caves under 2m of snow. Later, the thundering of avalanches kept me awake at night.

My mother, a Tirolean, left Austria after the war to join a Steiner community in the Pentland hills near Edinburgh. I remember walking 25 minutes to the bus stop at Dolphinton, Lanarkshire on dark winter mornings and travelling to school for an hour. I was looked after by Mary, a lovely bus conductress and a number of girls who took it upon themselves to teach me English/Scottish. I took all the blame for the War. All my holidays and later, a couple more school years were spent in Austria. Roaming the moors near Dunsyre was my favourite activity.

After five years at a boarding school near Gloucester I finished my secondary education at Peebles High School run by very educated dominies and a grim looking Head who turned out to be quite human. Then I finished my education at St. John's College, York. I chose Bury St Edmunds for my first teaching post as it was not too far from Harwich. Bury for me has been the graveyard of ambition but I do not regret it.

My wife Hilary and I love country Scottish country dancing, in fact that is how we met.

The irony is that we are returning to that same part of Scotland partly to be nearer our grandchildren, partly to compensate for the sale of our little farmhouse in France where we had a very large garden

I shall endeavour to keep you informed by emails. Keep safe and best wishes from Frederick

From Rob - All the best for your move and life in Scotland.

Dates for your Diary

Th 17 December 2021 - Carols and Chips, BSE Rugby Club (tbc)

Sa 25 September - Concert with Mansfield and District MVC, St John's Church, BSE, IP33 3QW (tbc)

Su 24 October - Concert with Honington Military Wives Choir and Lift, The Apex, BSE (tbc)

Su 5 December - Concert at Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, CB2 1TQ, with Lauren Hoskins.

Vienna and Salzburg Tour 2021

This is the current position on the proposed Austria concert tour.

At the end of March 2021, Melody Music will confirm whether or not the tour can go ahead depending on the Covid-19 situation.

If the situation is safe and the legislation from HMG permits the travel - we are allowed to sing - the tour will go ahead. The refunds for those booked on the 2020 tour who have already cancelled for 2021 will then be obtained by Melody Music.

Those who take part in the 2021 tour will have two months to pay the balance of the trip. There are additional costs to reflect the tour now being two days longer due to one night stops on the way there and back entirely by coach, going through the Channel Tunnel. The additional cost is £444 per head based on 60 travelling and sharing twin or double rooms. In reality the additional cost is only **£244** per head as you have received an air fare refund of £200.

At the end of March 2021, if the tour is not possible because of Covid-19 then all the remaining money will be refunded.

For those who have already notified that they are unable to travel on the 2021 tour, if the delay in Melody Music being unable to pay refunds until April presents a serious problem, consideration will be given for an interim payment from choir funds.

Melody Music's provisional itinerary, May/June 2021

Sa 29 Coach/es pick up from base at 8.00 am. Travel to Folkestone, then via Eurotunnel to Calais (approx. 38 min.) and on to Aachen (eta 5.30 pm). Stay one night on a bed and breakfast basis at Hotel Leonardo or similar. Evening at leisure.

Su 30 After breakfast, a scenic journey to Salzburg, stopping en route for lunch, eta 5.30 pm. Stay at Hotel Best Western Plus Amedia Art Salzburg on a bed and breakfast basis. All hotels used are central and of a good standard. Rest of the day at leisure.

During the tour, we will be accompanied by a Melody Music Agent and our guide. Both are fluent in English and German.

M 31 Free day in the City with optional touring available.

Tu 1 Mid-morning 1-hour scenic-route transfer to Hallstatt where you can have lunch and explore the lake (eta 1.30 pm). 6 pm meet at concert venue, Hallstatt Protestant church, for a 45 min rehearsal. One hour concert starts at 7 pm. The music here is freely chosen music. Post-concert we return to our hotel.

W 2 Travel to Vienna. En route, stop to visit places of interest. Bed and breakfast basis at Simm's Hotel (Simmeringer Hauptstrasse 55). Rest of day at leisure.

Th 3 After breakfast a morning city guided tour. 2.30 pm travel to St. Peter's Church, Petersplatz 1, Vienna with concert at 3 pm. Due to the history of this church, mostly Religious music is appropriate. Concert will feature a short Organ performance. Rest of day at leisure.

F 4 Morning and afternoon at leisure. 5.30 pm arrive St. Capuchin Church, Vienna for rehearsal. 6.30 pm one-hour concert. Post-concert there is time for a last supper in the city.

Sa 5 Check-out after breakfast and head for Stuttgart where we spend one night on a bed and breakfast basis.

Su 6 In the morning we board the coaches and make our way to Calais for a 4.30 pm crossing. On arrival in Folkestone, we continue back to base where the tour ends.

Please send your reports and pictures to:-

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