

ROSSETT SCHOOL MUSIC TOUR PARIS 2006

FRIDAY 30 JUNE

The second Music Trip to Paris departed in the early hours of Friday morning on 30 June for a weekend of performing music in this magnificent city. Ensembles participating in the trip were Stage Plus, Rossett Jazz, Saxophonix and Samba Band. The tour comprised of 57 pupils with 7 accompanying staff all assembled to travel in our brand new tour hoodies making us easily identifiable! It was an excited group who assembled at the front of school, even with the prospect ahead of little sleep! As the coach departed for Dover, there was a buzz of excitement amongst the pupils and steady conversation all through the night! The staff attempted to catch some sleep knowing how full the day ahead was going to be!

We arrived in Dover at something like 5.30 am – as we approached the coast, nothing would do but that Marie would apply her full make-up on the back seat of the coach! By this time everyone was wide-awake and ready to get off the coach and have a drink and leg stretch whilst waiting for the ferry. In Dover we also picked up our quite magnificent coach driver for the tour, Vince. His first problem was to deal with our flat tyre on the coach. Here, members of staff were complemented on the excellent behaviour of our pupils and we met someone who knew Mr Ess!! Quickly repaired we were able to catch our appointed ferry, but the tyre was flat again by the time we got to Calais.

We had to take a long break at a service station in Calais whilst we waited for the wheel to be repaired! Although it was hot and sunny and we only had a triangle of grass with no shade to sit and wait on, the pupils were all so well behaved and



amused themselves very easily talking, playing cards and other games. Mrs Grainger and I did some yoga which some of the group joined in with and Matthew spent a lot of time perfecting his handstands with advice from Mr White! Vince also pointed us in the direction of the nearby hypermarket where we were all able to get some lunch and more drinks. Finally we were on our way!!

The significant delay in Calais meant that we were running late for the rest of the day so instead of having time to go along

to our hostel first, we drove straight to our first concert venue the Jardin du Luxembourg. The team moved in to action with everyone helping to unload the coach and set up on the bandstand under the trees. Already the citizens of Paris were settling in to a long hot weekend. There were lots of people out in the gardens and thus an excellent and responsive audience for our pupils. All four groups played or sang here and there were many compliments from the audience and much enthusiastic applause. It was after 9.30 pm before we finally arrived at our hostel Le Bois du Lys, in a wonderful rural setting. The staff throughout our stay looked after us so well. Our meal had been held for us and with a menu of pizza, chicken and chips and ice cream, there weren't any complaints. It was off to bed for everyone, all shattered after a very long day.

SATURDAY 1 JULY

Our day was entirely spent at the Disneyland Resort in Paris where all the music ensembles were to perform. Our entry to the resort was through the service entrance which in itself was fascinating as this is the area where things are stored when not in use. We passed a rather bizarre collection of Disney memorabilia en route to the bus park. Unfortunately no photographs were permitted in this area at all. All Disney staff eat and rest in this area, so everyone was in some kind of costume! The bulk of the day for us all was spent sampling the delights of Disney – the rides, the shopping etc. Our venue for the late afternoon performance was the Lucky Nugget Saloon where we assembled to change and get the instruments organised before running through the sound checks. From this point of view we had all the technical advice and support that we needed and the service of two Magic Music Days staff throughout. Our advance rules for performing at Disney had been very strict. An audition tape had to be sent ahead and then specific rules for length of performance, dress code etc. were followed. The Lucky Nugget Saloon was a wonderful auditorium in which to perform but unfortunately not very good from an audience point of view, especially on a hot day at the end of the Parade! It was also the England World Cup match at the time in which England got knocked out, so I think some of the boys were glad in the end to



have been otherwise occupied with Vince keeping an eye on the score! All the ensembles sounded fantastic and we were very proud of them all! Everyone had another couple of hours to spend at Disney after the concert, a good chance to relax. The group photograph was taken outside the entrance to Disney on our way back to the coach.

SUNDAY 2 JULY

A blazing hot day for our last full day in the capital and our first trip was to the Eiffel Tower and up to the top along with all the many other visitors. The group had a patient wait to get in to the tower and one plagued by beggars! Our visit was fairly short as we had a concert to perform in the early afternoon. It was certainly worth the trip to the top as the views were amazing and even those who did not like heights were brave enough to go along with everyone else. Many of us chose the walk down option and shared the wobbly legs syndrome at the bottom!

Our concert venue was at the Parc Champs de Mars with a stunning view of the Eiffel Tower from the huge bandstand which provided a much needed shady area in which to perform. Everyone enjoyed a packed lunch in the bandstand before getting ready to perform. Mrs Bromhead sampled the delights of the French toilet under the bandstand! Parisians were out in the sun on this Sunday afternoon and the Samba Band played a spot to



attract attention, after which there was an ever changing audience as people came and went enjoying our music. Shady benches were available for those who had performed and by this time many of our pupils were beginning to feel the pace! From our venue it was on the bus again and off to spend sometime at the La Defense area where unusually all the shops were open for the first day of the sales.

Back at the hostel, we were once again treated to an excellent meal and staff at the centre had made a special celebration millefeuilles cake to celebrate Joe's birthday. This was enjoyed by everyone for dessert!

The rest of the evening was spent in the traditional end-of-tour entertainment where all staff and students were required to participate! This produced an excellent and varied evening. The staff performed Jack and the Beanstalk and our wonderful coach driver Vince joined in with us all. There was some percussion work involving a radiator, Mrs Waddington and Mrs Bromhead discovered the hidden singing talents of some of our boys, Mr Parapia gave a mean Oasis impression, playing the bottle was a new skill learned, at least one stand up comic was born and some hilarious sketches produced. It was a real communal effort and really captured the great spirit which had been evident all through the tour. It was a pleasure to spend such an evening with such a great group of people! Tom Lilley, on behalf of all the students, presented the tour organiser Mrs Waddington with her gift of a fairy wand and the thanks of everyone for a job very well done.

MONDAY 3 JULY

Time to go home! We had to vacate the hostel at 9 am with Vince having had to repair yet another tyre, this time on the trailer! Once again the luggage team moved into action and special mention must be made of Dan McGeachie who was the one to get into the hold of the bus every time to load and unload the instruments. The older boys carried all the heavier things and everyone else had to carry at least one item of luggage. By our last day the group had packing down to a fine art!

Our bus trip to Calais became rather tedious and long as we were held up in traffic because of an accident. This meant that we missed our ferry at Calais and could not get on another ferry until 4.10 pm. There was a rather poor area to wait at the terminal – concrete and hot with only dispensing machines providing refreshments. Once again our students rallied and sat and talked and amused themselves very happily and without complaint. The ferry trip was a welcome relief after the wait and a chance for everyone to eat a meal as this had not been possible on our journey. There is nothing like a good meal for making everyone feel better and this fortified us for the next stage of the trip. Unfortunately our late arrival in Dover meant that we got caught up in the London traffic at the end of a working day, so again we were delayed. There was just one break on our way home at Watford Gap services where Vince handed over the driving but came with us back to Harrogate anyway. By this time he was one of the gang and it was his birthday!

It was a tired group that arrived back at school at 11.30 to be met by parents and family. All the instruments still needed to be unloaded thought and once again everyone helped to do this whilst staff cleaned out the bus! The only problem with a long bus journey is the amount of litter which is generated!! Goodbyes were said and staff finally left the car park at about midnight exhausted after another really excellent tour all round.

Charlotte South