

The Cathedral Choirs' Tour of Paris, August 2015
 based on an account by Chorister
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 Photos by Rachel Fielding

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We left Blackburn at 04.45 in the rain – but very excited.
*Here are the girls and boys at Dover – I'm front row 2nd
 from the left.*



The journey took a long time and the sea was a little rough - we were all glad to arrive in Paris where we stayed at the Centre International de Sejour, 17 Boulevard Kellermann.



On the first morning everyone was really looking forward to singing the first concert but first we had a visit to **Chateau Versailles** and the gardens which were very impressive but rather hot.

Shaun Turnbull in white on the left. Photo Philip Hunwick



Boys and Girls at Versailles

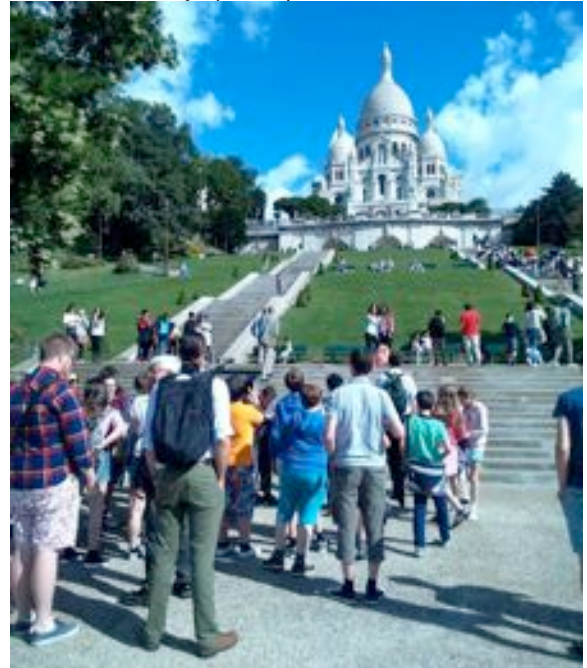


After lunch in the grounds we went to give our first concert venue which was at **La Trinité**.



Messiaen had been the organist here for over 60 years. Before the concert we were provided with lovely food from a local restaurant. The concert went really well but the audience was disappointingly small. (We did better thereafter.)

The next day, after a delicious breakfast, we departed for Montmartre and had a look around **Sacré-Coeur**, which was amazing. Although it was very busy with visitors you could feel that it was a very special place.



Then we had a bit of free time at the artists' square and bought souvenirs and lunch.



L-R: Tony Snape, Peter Eastham, my Mother Rachel Fielding, former organ scholar Benedict Todd & Mr Hudson. Photo: Philip Hunwick.

After this we went to **La Madeleine** and really enjoyed singing to an audience of over 200 people.



The past organists at this church included **Saint-Saens** (who composed the *Organ Symphony* which Mr Hudson played last season), and **Gabriel Fauré** – who composed the famous *Requiem*.

At the end of the concert we returned to the hotel, had tea and then had some free time in a local park to relax - it wasn't all work!



On Friday we went to the Latin Quarter and sang another concert - this time at **Saint-Sulpice**.

This is the church which was featured in *The Da Vinci Code* – but there is a notice there which told us that what was written about Saint-Sulpice in that story isn't true!



This church, second only in size to Notre Dame, has a famous organ by Cavallé-Coll, which has been presided

over by some very famous organists, including **Widor** (of the *Toccata* fame) and **Marcel Dupré**.

Here's **Dupré** playing the organ



and here's my brother, **William**, playing the same organ!



And here are **Blackburn Choirs** singing in that famous church.



Saint-Sulpice had an amazing atmosphere and was inspirational to sing in. We were allocated a side room to change into our robes and the staff were kind and friendly. It was sad thought as it was our last concert.

The music we sang at our three concerts included:

- Byrd – Vigilate
- Stanford – Beati quorum via
- Walton – Set me as a seal
- Howells – Here is the Little Door
- MacMillan – O Radiant Dawn
- David Cooper (former Blackburn DoM) – Dormi Jesu
- Bednall – Tribus miraculis
- Bussey – The Jesse Tree
- Willcocks – Tomorrow shall be my dancing day
- Seb Roberts (our Deputy Head Boy) – God be in my head
- Parsons – Ave Maria
- Meador – Ubi Caritas
- Beamis – In the stillness

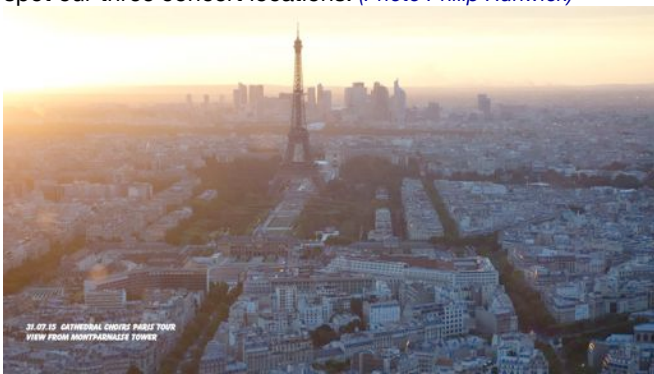
Some of our choirmen relaxing near Saint-Sulpice:



Andrew Orr, Andrew Armstrong, Tim Braithwaite, Tim Ferguson, Phil Johnson & Tony Snape. (Photo Philip Hunwick)

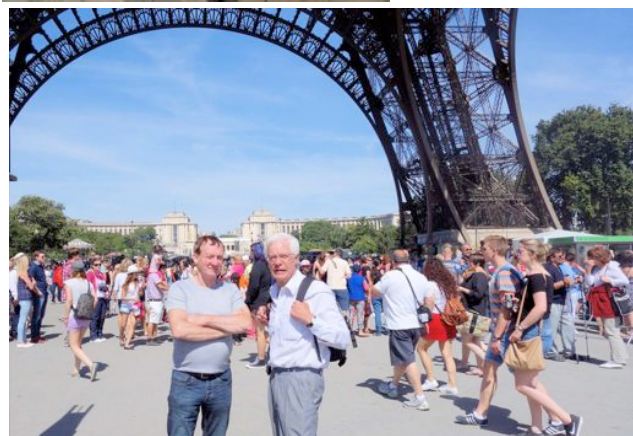
After the concert we travelled to Île de la Cité to look around the famous **Notre Dame** - seeing this was a great experience - as everyone knows it is a very famous and impressive building.

That night we went for a trip up Montparnasse Tower to see Paris - which had a breath-taking view - we managed to spot our three concert locations! (Photo Philip Hunwick)



The next, and final full day, an excited and tired choir had a eventful day in **Euro Disney** - it was a very enjoyable and fun day.

Some of the adults visited other places: here's Peter Eastham with my Dad at the Eiffel Tower.



Here we all are by the Eiffel Tower, with Mr Hudson on the left



After this we returned for the final time to our accommodation for our last well-earned meal and packing.

Very early the next day we departed from Paris and sailed from Calais to Dover. On the ferry we had lunch and did some last minute shopping.



Tim Braithwaite sleeping.

At about 8 o'clock we arrived back in Blackburn, tired, but with many amazing memories of Paris.

I thought the Paris tour was really good because it gave us all a chance to bond with the other choir members - boys, girls and men.

It was a great to see and sing in some of the wonderful churches of Paris. It was great tasting all the different foods and I liked being able to sing in some beautiful, famous places.

My favourite place in which to sing was **La Madeleine**, because it was a large place and the sound was great.

My favourite piece of music was **Tribus Miraculis** by **David Bednall** because it's exciting and challenging to sing, and also because the girls sang without the boys and so we had to work harder!

I would like to thank all of those who helped to make this year's tour what it was - especially Mr Hudson - it was **TOTALLY AMAZING**.

Elizabeth Fielding