

"Wir leben Deutschland"

## Tour Report

Thursday 31st October

23 members of the choirs flew from Southend Airport to Berlin last night, and are staying 2 nights in Potsdam Youth Hostel.

Today, Thursday we spent the whole day in Berlin, travelling around on the brilliant German trains and trams, all for 3 Euros each! We started at the Brandenburg Gate then walked to the Reichstag then walked the walk of the Berlin Wall to the Jewish Memorial, From there, after a welcome coffee break, we walked to the site of the Hitler Bunker then to Potsdamer Platz.

We visited the Museum the Topography of Terror, followed by a visit to Check Point Charlie and the inevitable McDonalds (for some).

After lunch we took the underground to Alexander Platz for some shopping and free time, seeing the World Clock. Then a tram ride and a walk along the Unter den Linden, past the Cathedral, the Museums etc to the new main station. A dinner stop and finally our train back to Potsdam Youth Hostel where some of the choir dressed suitably for their very own Halloween party.

After a busy day in Berlin we spent a morning in Potsdam, having taken the tram from the Youth Hostel. Potsdam had lots of offer, with shops, cafes and plenty of places to purchase souvenirs. A coach met us to take us to Hamburg where we met our host families for the next 2 nights - the members of the Madchenchor. For some singers this was a welcome reunion from earlier this year when we hosted the choir in Southend, and for others it was a chance to make new friends, and even to try out a little German. Saturday was a very wet day, so we took the chance to visit the City Hall and then to take cover inside a large shopping centre before catching the train to our concert venue. The afternoon concert was full, and it was a lovely opportunity to watch and listen to each others' programmes, and to join together at the end. The Southend Choirs taught our German hosts "Hippopotamus Song"! After the concert everyone returned home with their hosts to relax for the final evening. On Sunday morning we were invited to sing in the Anglican Church, where we were made extremely welcome, before making a visit to the "Miniature Wunderland". This is the largest model railway exhibition in Germany, and not only had the most intricate railway network, but also had an airport with flights departing and landing all the time. This was a great way to spend our last few hours in Hamburg before making our way back to Berlin to catch our flight home to Southend. The 23 singers and accompanying adults had all greatly enjoyed their short tour to Germany, and we look forward to welcoming the Madchenchor back to Southend in the future.