

Tissue paper commemorative programmes and napkins

Gavin Holman – July 2019

During a fascinating few hours with Steve Hughes in June, discussing and examining the wealth of Besses o' th' Barn historical material he is working on, I came across something I had not seen before – a programme for a Besses' concert printed on a square of thin tissue paper.



Besses' final concert before embarking on their first world tour in 1906

There were three example of these commemorative "tissue paper" programmes (about 14" square), very fragile, looking like the sort of thing you sometimes got in restaurants as place mats. They dated from 1906, 1909 & 1937, and I've since found a few other

examples - one of the Garde Republicaine visiting London in 190? and another celebrating the 58th anniversary of the Salvation Army in 1923.

Co-operative Hall, Radcliffe.
MELLOR CONVALESCENT FUND.
Grand Last Farewell Concert
In the Co-operative Hall, Radcliffe, previous to their great World's Tour, by the Fiddlers.
BESSES O'TH' BARN BAND.
Monday, Oct 18th, 1909, at 7-30 p.m.
 Conductor - Mr. Cass Smith Soloists - Mr. Alan Ouse

PROGRAMME.

GRAND MARCH	"Sally"	Mr. Ouse
OVERTURE	"Fiddlers"	Mr. Ouse
XYLOPHONE SOLO	"Wooded Broom"	Mr. Ouse
Report and Statement - Mellor Convalescent Fund - by Mr. George Hill, Hon. Sec.		
COCKNEY SOLO	"Dinner of Love"	Mr. Ouse
SELECTION	"The Fiddlers"	Mr. Ouse
INTERVAL		
INTERMEZZO	"Sally"	Mr. Ouse
TRUMPET SOLO	"Fiddlers"	Mr. Ouse
SELECTION	"Sally"	Mr. Ouse
DUET	"Sally"	Mr. Ouse
FANTASIA	"Sally"	Mr. Ouse

Besses' final concert before embarking on their second world tour in 1909

Allan Littlemore had also discovered some similar programmes inserted into some books in his collection – see <https://www.4barsrest.com/articles/2018/1684.asp>, and <https://www.4barsrest.com/articles/2018/1726.asp>

THE PALACE, Promenade, Blackpool.
General Manager: Mr. Alex. H. Walker. Acting Manager: Mr. Fred Walker.

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 11th, 1909.
TWO GRAND CONCERTS
BY THE
BESSE-O' TH'-BARN BAND.
Conductor: Mr. Alex. Owen
Afternoon at 3-0. Evening at 8-0.

Vocalist: Miss ETHEL STEPHENSON, Contralto.

PROGRAMME.

March..... "Coraline"..... Minelohite	March..... "Edith"..... J. O. Hunt
Overture..... "Din Giovanni"..... Minelohite	Overture..... "Roy King"..... Minelohite
Song..... "The Lord is my Shepherd"..... S. Liddie Miss Ethel Stephenson.	Song..... "What the Cuckoo Sang"..... G. Grinstead Miss Ethel Stephenson.
Coronet Solo..... "Abide with me"..... Liddie Mr. S. Pyatt.	Coronet Solo (Selected)..... Mr. W. Weedall.
Selection..... "Le Prophete"..... Meyerloh	Selection..... "Oberea"..... 1870
Trombone Solo..... "Angel's Grand Tune"..... Gelford Mr. T. Bowling.	Euphonium Solo (Selected)..... Mr. E. P. Kerry.
Song..... "Good-bye"..... F. Tim Miss Ethel Stephenson.	Song..... "Abide with me"..... S. Liddie Miss Ethel Stephenson.
Selection..... "Spout"..... L. S. 1870	Selection..... "William Tell"..... Roman
Chorus..... "My Soul praise the Lord"..... Meyerloh	Solo and Chorus..... "O come let us Worship"..... Minelohite

National Anthem.

The Management respectfully request members of the audience to remain seated until the end of the Concert. Much inconvenience is caused to the greater section of patrons, as well as the performers, by persons leaving the hall before the termination of the concert, and, in deference to the majority, it is hoped those desirous of leaving will choose to do so at the interval.

Besse's concert at Blackpool, 1909

In 1887 the British firm John Dickinson Ltd. had acquired decorated napkins from Japan. They overprinted logos and other marketing-related information on top of the napkins, turning them into souvenirs.

Similar commemorative tissue napkins were produced as souvenirs of several other notable events during this period, exhibitions, royal visits etc. Quite often the same basic colour printed square was used with a different, usually monochrome, printed centre with the details of the event and/or visitors.

Here are some further examples of this very ephemeral form of souvenir – given their very fragile nature it is not surprising that so few still exist today.



King & Queen visit Woolwich 1912



Peace celebrations 1919



King of Portugal's visit 1909



London Air Raid, 1917



King & Queen visit Retford & Hull



Death of King Edward VII, 1910



Centenary of Nelson's death, 1905



Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee 1897



Stockton to Darlington railway centenary, 1925



Visit of King & Queen of Italy



Duke of Kent's wedding, 1934



Sinking of the Titanic, 1912



Franco-British Exhibition