

13th October 2020

Transport

"A Transport of Delight."

Michael Flanders and Donald Swann

Song Title from 'The Complete Flanders and Swan' (1991)

The word "transport" comes from the Latin *transportare*, which means "to carry across", and indicates the movement of people, animals and goods from one place to another. It's used most commonly when we talk about "public transport", a methodology in all countries of carrying us from here to there, across whatever distance we need to travel.

The *Ha'penny Bridge* is a pedestrian crossing built in 1816 over the River Liffey in Dublin. To pay for its construction, everyone crossing it had to pay a half-penny, and there was a tollkeeper to collect the payments. On one occasion, we're told, two inebriated characters wanted to cross but only had money for one pedestrian. "Is there any charge for luggage?" one of them enquired. "Not at all," he was told. At that point, he paid his half-penny, lifted his companion on to his shoulders, and carried his free "luggage" to the other side. A clever use of "transport" indeed!

But transportation isn't always *physical*. I've been a bit down recently and decided to watch a random Prom concert on *YouTube* over breakfast – just because I can. It turned out to be Daniel Barenboim conducting the West-East Divan Orchestra in an amazing performance of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony. For a few moments I was "taken out of myself" (as my old Granny would say), brought to a different and delightful, place. Carried beyond kitchen, time and mood, I had found my "transport of delight".

Music can do that. So can films, and photographs, and artefacts, and memories. And so can people. We may not need to transport someone *physically* across a bridge from one place to another, and they may not seek that or want it. But with sensitivity, listening, kindness, empathy, we can all help people to be "taken out of themselves", to find a fresh perspective, a new place from which to see their world in a different way.

A prayer for today

*Loving God, help me to be aware of the needs of those around me.
And, if it's needed, help me to be a "transport of delight"
for someone who needs to be carried to a better place today. Amen.*

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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