

SRP BRANCH NEWS AUTUMN 2012

BRISTOL

Recorder players were very busy in this area in May. One week after Ann Lyall's splendid Batheaston Day when nearly 80 people were involved in an outing of Tallis' famous 40-part motet, Bristol branch hosted a special SRP 75th Anniversary Playing Day tutored by Eileen Silcocks. The aim of the day was to play again some of the works which have been composed for our branch over the past 64 years. The programme included 'In Bristowe Town' by David Selwyn; an arrangement by Philip Evry of 'Krakowiak' by Moszowski ; and two works by Eileen - 'West Country Suite' and 'Playford Suite'.

For this occasion we had commissioned Eileen to write a new work and she produced 'Passacaglia' - a lovely atmospheric piece in 9 parts. It spoke to me of a cold, windy landscape with lovely harmonies carefully chosen to be easily accessible to SRP players. We look forward to playing it again in our next Blockflute Band concert in November.

Another treat to come, on 20th October, will be a visit from Evelyn Nallen who will lead an SRP Workshop on Ornamentation. We hope that this will provide a splendid opportunity for members and visitors to unlock the mysteries of ornamentation, a topic which many find so daunting. Anyone interested in coming along to the day please contact our Secretary or look on our web-site for an application form.

CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER

There has been lots of recorder playing in and around the Cheltenham and Gloucester Branch in the last few months!

In May members and visitors enjoyed a well-attended playing day in Gloucester, held at Matson Baptist Church and run by Alyson Lewin. Alyson not only helped us to get the best out of five different pieces of music, she also kept us entertained and informed in her own relaxed and friendly way. She was able to bring with her a good selection of Hawthorns Music, which was much appreciated.

The June meeting saw our annual "Recorders and Strings" session organised and conducted by John Thorn. The music chosen was varied in style, and good to play. John was able to form two bands at either side of the room – recorders from descant to C bass , and strings from violin to double bass. Michael Barrett came along to play keyboard in the middle! John managed to produce a full and rounded sound from us on pieces as widely different as Baroque and Jazz.

As well as our regular monthly meetings, small groups have been meeting in homes to play in recorder consorts as and when they are able. We have several U3A recorder groups within our area which have a good following; it is good to note that our branch has seen several U3A members come to join in with us as well over the past year or two.

As a branch we are always trying to reach out to future SRP members. This year has seen a link with a South Gloucestershire primary school, where some of our members have been helping on an occasional basis with an out-of-school recorder club run by two recorder playing mothers . We are hoping to be able to repeat this as opportunity arises.

Mostly formed of branch members, our performing ensemble Major Pipework has given two concerts so far this year. Croome Park NT in Worcestershire hosted us in May for a concert of light music through the ages, and a similar programme was played in the Pre-Raphaelite All Saints' Church Cheltenham to raise funds for their organ, which was played on by Gustav Holst's father. Later in the year we shall be playing at Lodge Park NT near Burford and in Cheltenham Parish Church.

It is worth mentioning to finish that the branch is organising a day for people (not just branch members) who would like to take part in a beginners course in conducting. Moira Usher will lead it on November 3rd at Matson Baptist Church in Gloucester, and it promises to be a good day's recorder playing with purpose. It has been made possible by a bequest from one of our members, Arthur Humphrey, who was always keen to make the pleasures of the recorder known to a wider public. We need not only people who would like to have a go at conducting, but also players to form the orchestra for them to conduct! It would be lovely to have a packed church for Moira, so if you would like to join in either or both capacities, please contact us or the SRP website, for an application form.

CUMBRIA

One of our members, 18 year old Marion Bettsworth, has gained distinction at Grade 8 in piano, flute and recorder. She has recently tackled grade 8 on organ and no doubt will have achieved similar success. Marion started playing the recorder at the age of 4 at Lancaster Community Music Centre. She says, "Thanks to CRS and events within the SRP I have come across some huge recorders! Playing in a recorder consort allows you to play inner parts or bass, whereas my other instruments are mostly solo or accompaniment." Marion has the offer of a place at Lincoln College, Oxford, to study music.

For the past few years our Musical Director, Bob Berry, has been attempting to get us playing from memory. To aid us in this endeavour Bob has compiled a collection of 50 tunes, which he has called 'The Cumbrian Remembrancer'. Each member of the branch has been given a copy of this amazing resource. Now all we have to do is memorise them! Well done, Bob!

A rainy day in June did not dampen our spirits as we gathered for Sheila Richards' Pastoral Visit. Sheila delighted us with her humorous and encouraging manner and she offered us a wide range of music to play. For lovers of early music we started with 'Das Glaut zu Speyer' by Senfl, which imitated bells and contrasted well with the next piece, Dowland's 'Sorrow'. Two sonatas followed, one by Schmelzer and another by Albinoni. The lunch break gave us a chance to catch up with friends seen only once or twice a year and we were also able to peruse and purchase music from the Willobie Press.

The afternoon session started with a glorious Magnificat by Zielenski (the Polish Gabrieli!) and we then moved through the centuries, playing Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5 and Sheila's suite 'Fairies from Ireland'. A change of mood came with 'Bobby Shafto's all at Sea' by Ken Garfield and we finished with 'A Perfect Day' by Carrie Jacobs-Bond, all feeling that we had indeed had a perfect day.

GLASGOW

It's always good to be asked back to a venue where we have played before and this spring was no exception. We were invited once again to play a concert with our MD Pamela Flanagan at the Erskine homes for Service Personnel. We opened with a great version of The Liberty Bell by Sousa that roused not only foot tapping but also a little impromptu conducting from a member of the audience. We later found out that he had been a Bandmaster so his applause was most appreciated, but watch out Pamela you had competition! The rest of the Programme included some Holborne, a delightful Irish Suite that included a piece entitled The Goroom (if anyone knows what this is please pass it on) Brian Bonsor's Afton Water and finished with his Festivo. It was good fun and our audience seemed to enjoy the choice of music.

Later in May three groups participated in a Workshop with Eileen Silcocks. This is always a good experience as Eileen offers so much encouragement and advice. Some of it surely must sink in. There were two quartets and a trio. The first quartet played The Waterfall by Ann Marshall and Chilcot's Gigue. Two very contrasting pieces that the group worked on getting the tone poem idea of the one and the period style of the Chilcot.

The other quartet attempted two movements from John Hawkes's Quartet No. 4 that included almost every accidental that is known to man. The Variants movement can be just that, and not always the composer's variations.

We were delighted to have a trio from Edinburgh for the first time. They had chosen Prelude and Fugue in D minor by William Boyce and Hook's 2nd Terzetto, both are great favourites with recorder players.

After the tutoring sessions we performed to one another and then enjoyed a wonderful buffet. Eileen rounded off the day with a mass playing of Just Fun by Allan Rosenheck.

HULLAVINGTON

Hullavington remains, I think, quite unusual for an SRP Branch. We meet every Tuesday and play together for around an hour and a half. We revisit music from week to week, enjoy working together to improve our playing, and usually find something to laugh about. Our membership ranges in age from our youngest player in her 20s to our oldest who is 86, with each decade represented in between.

For our summer playing day, Jack Brothwell from the South Cotswold Branch put together an exciting repertoire of tunes for the group to play, including his own arrangements of the dance tunes to be performed in the afternoon by Malmesbury Morris. This proved to be the highlight of the day. The morris dancers relished the experience of dancing to the big sound from the recorder orchestra, augmented by Jack on accordion and John, their banjo player. And it proved to be a novel experience for the recorder players, one of whom commented "Playing for the dancing added a whole new dimension, which really surprised me. I probably always thought that the music drove the dancing, but actually it's the other way around."

This summer we have played locally at a church flower festival in Chippenham, and at the time of going to press are awaiting playing events at Lacock Abbey and Malmesbury's Abbey House Gardens.

LINCOLN

Hello! world of recorder players out there. It's Friday 29th June. Outside the storms and floods have been raging. Although it hailed yesterday!.... the temperature, thankfully, has risen significantly. The red arrows have just flown over Lincoln...and the Olympic torch passed through 24 hours ago. An exciting month for the national media and an exciting one for the Lincs. SRP.

Last Saturday, in true patriotic spirit, we played in a local 'Proms' concert. This grand performance took place at the Bailgate church in the centre of uphill Lincoln. We shared our fame with the Lindum Ladies Choir.

Sixteen of us played Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel...arr. C. Ball.....J. Bratton's Teddy Bears' Picnic arr.R. Benton and Elgar's Nimrod..arr.R Winters.

Strangely enough, Nimrod was appreciated the most...must be the result of our national patriotic mood at present! However, for me, the highlight of the evening was the first performance of Spring Magic and The Song of the Snowdrop Fairy. Both pieces were written by Nicholas Wynne and were scored for soprano voice and recorder quintet.

Nicholas derived his inspiration from Cecily Mary Barker's Fairy poems and wrote two most atmospheric and descriptive pieces. For recorder players, the performance was quite unique in style and success. Should any branch wish to hire these pieces, please contact us at Lincoln.

Nicholas is continuing to write more Fairy Songs so there should be a complete suite arriving shortly.

Lincs. Branch have also given other diverse and interesting performances this year.music with the Waytes of Lincoln, music for church Lunch clubs, and Christmas recitals. Our success at the Lincs. Music Festival was also most notable.

We are constantly doing new things at Lincoln, latest being the development of our own website.

Here, you can... see videos.... read latest news...and listen to recordings of our latest performances.

[\(lincs@srp.org.uk\)](mailto:lincs@srp.org.uk)

LONDON

London Branch continues to run a successful monthly meeting under a variety of conductors. Our musical director, Joanna Brown has introduced some innovative programmes. In the last few months we have had a session with viola da gambas and singers conducted by Michael Brown and another with recorder playing and dancing led by Andrew Melville.

On September 15, 2012 we will be led by David Moses. He was one of those who developed his skill as a conductor and arranger through Joanna Brown's introduction of "have-a-go" conducting opportunities, allowing Branch members to try out their skills with one or two short pieces. David Moses had a very successful session with his own arrangements and will taking the Branch in a full session this time. We are all looking forward to it.

On October 20, 2012 we will be conducted by Sheila Richards, a favourite of our Branch who brings with her a selection of her own arrangements and on November 17, 2012 we will have yet another "have-a-go at conducting" session.

The Branch meets in The Napier Hall, Hide Place SW1, just off Vincent Square. Meeting are from 2:30 to 5:30 and we welcome visitors. For information please phone Bob Horsley on 020 8693 4319.

NUNEATON

Alyson Lewin, whom it was a great pleasure to welcome back as guest conductor of May's pastoral meeting, had promised that some of the music provided would be suitable for a royal occasion. Although the first piece, Dirge, suggested a downbeat mood, it was composed by Thomas Attwood as an uplifting tribute to be played at Horatio Nelson's funeral on 9th January 1806 in St. Paul's Cathedral, and conveyed the atmosphere of an important state event. The regal theme was then consolidated by The Queen's Alman from the pen of William Byrd, a great favourite of the first Queen Elizabeth, and the initial half of the meeting closed with an anonymous work, The King's Morisco, an early version of the Morris dance. After tea, members played an arrangement by Arthur Agnew of Ronald Binge's Elizabethan Serenade, associated with the early years of the present Queen's reign. Following this, Alyson conducted one of her own compositions, entitled The Ladies of The Vale, an epithet bestowed on Lichfield Cathedral, the subject of the work, commissioned for the 1984 Staffordshire Recorder Festival. The final item, performed with appropriate gravitas, was Almighty and Everlasting God, a sacred piece by Orlando Gibbons.

PETERBOROUGH

The early summer saw us focussing on a couple of forthcoming performances. The programme ranged from the very early de Sermisy, via Dowland, de Lully, Greaves and Holborne to the more modern era, with extracts from Boyce' Symphony no 1, finishing up on a lighter note with 19th century songs from Stephen Foster.

We accepted a repeat invitation to play at Botolph Green festival. Last year we found ourselves so far from our audience that we had no chance of being heard. This time we were promised a better location but the weather intervened, forcing us into the beer tent! Again we struggled.

Nevertheless getting out to community events like this is what the SRP should do, and potential recruits made themselves known.

WARWICK

Warwick Branch was treated to a lovely afternoon at their May meeting with Ann Marshall as guest conductor. Ann brought a selection of beautifully harmonious music, including some of her own compositions, and gently guided us to a high standard of performance. Many thanks to Ann and we look forward to welcoming her to conduct a Playing Day in October 2013.