

## BRISTOL

Definitely the right way to spend Saturday afternoon!

Ross Winters' teaching at our Pastoral Visit was excellent and enjoyable: we had several laughs while we improved our playing out of all recognition. As he taught us the pieces "in chunks", we became real Renaissance players with knowledge of the structure of the pieces that we could then convey to the listener; Ross himself. He was the only one in the centre of us and he seemed to like how we played after the explanations!

Spanning eras, we started with a couple of Canzonas and Intradas (1618) by Erasmus Widmann for five parts: very rich and satisfying. We followed these with the innovative and mind-blowing J. S. Bach of the baroque era: Ricercare in 6 parts from *The Musical Offering* arranged by Alan Davis, before we decided tea was needed and more study would pay dividends another day!

We moved on to the much more recent and luscious *Irish Suite* arranged by Paul Clark, again in five parts so a good solid feel with lots of fast fun and folky bits.

Back to Alfonso Ferrabosco the younger (1575-1628), his Fantasia No.3, from Jacobean times in King James' Court. His Italian heritage showed in his style being more adventurous than usual in those times.

Several of us turned to each other saying how good it was to understand the music and really play sensitively with each other as a consequence.

We left with smiles and a light feeling from the very satisfying workshop that Ross generously gave us. A great day out in Bristol, even before gromiting around the new Gromit trail!

## HULLAVINGTON

Last year we invited Jack Brothwell for our playing day, and enjoyed a close encounter with (mainly) British folk tunes. It was great fun, so, by way of a follow-up this year, Jack optimistically suggested a look back at 1,000 years of dance music, though we added 'well ..... almost' on the flyer, just in case.

Jack was keen to find some dance music that was 1,000 years old. It turned out to be harder than he had imagined. He wanted to find a British tune if possible and so, with his folk roots showing, he remembered Abbots Bromley. The village of Abbots Bromley is in Staffordshire and every year in September they perform their 'Horn Dance' whereby twelve dancers, six of whom wear a set of horns, perform a dance that is similar to a morris dance. The horns have hung in the church for centuries and, according to the official website, have been carbon dated as being over 1,000 years old. They may have replaced an even older set.

Jack explained "The oldest tune noted down for the dance was in about 1857. This may seem surprisingly late but you have to remember that folk musicians rarely read music in those days and would simply have learned 'by ear'. The tune is a distinctive 'lumpy' jig time piece and is still well known amongst folk musicians. The 1857 version is in G minor and may well have been played on the fiddle. I moved the tune into E minor to suit the range of the recorder and added a bit of a 'mystical' opening and ending. I like trying innovative techniques now and again - juxtaposing the ancient and modern - and so I mixed in some 'labium squeaks' with some simple whole tone progressions. It may have been a little perplexing at first but everyone soon seemed to grasp what I

was trying to do.”

The rest of the repertoire for the day was a mixture of old and new. We did a selection Susato dances culminating with the group playing for dancing as Jack taught Maggie Dyson to dance a pavane!

We looked at Eileen Silcocks' arrangements of some Playford tunes and Jack was keen to try out his new arrangements of *Moonlight Serenade* and *Por Una Cabeza* – an Argentinian tango by Carlos Gardel. For some arrangements he added a bit of bass guitar and percussion, and in our group we often use a cello to add extra warmth to the bass line.

With celebration being in mind this year we also played Lyndon Hilling's *Fox Trot* and *Celebration Rag*. We finished with Jack's new arrangement of the *Can-Can*.

If Jack plans a similar day then he's threatening to do an arrangement of *Dancing Queen* and call the day 'From Abbots Bromley to ABBA' ! He was kind enough to say "It is nice to work for an SRP branch that is adventurous and enterprising in what it offers." We had some very positive feedback after our day.

It was gratifying to be one of the first groups to receive a Jubilee Grant from the SRP as our playing day celebrated 75 years of SRP. Our group continues to thrive and expand under the musical direction of Peter Cotterill. We are preparing for the future of recorder music in our village with our outreach group, where our members give recorder lessons in the local primary school.

## **NUNEATON**

Once again Alan Perkins made his annual journey from Northamptonshire to conduct our September meeting, bringing his own arrangements of a varied musical collection. The first piece, Peter DeRose's well-known standard from the 1930s, *Deep Purple*, was followed by a complete change of period as we played the verse anthem *Lord, Let Me Know Mine End* by the 18th century English composer Maurice Greene. There was then another contrast with Elgar's Minuet and Sarabande from *Four Dances for Wind Quintet*. After tea four Romanian Dances by Bartók proved to be quite a challenge with which to end a most enjoyable afternoon. We are very grateful to Alan for this yearly highlight in our calendar.

## **SHEFFIELD**

Sheffield branch continues to go from strength to strength! We've had a very varied season of events, with some rather special days in addition to our normal monthly meetings at St. John's Church Hall, Abbeydale.

Guest conductors Evelyn Nallen, Petrina Lodge, Caroline Jones, Sheila Richards, Adam Dopadlik, Margaret Shearing, David Scruby, Colin Touchin and Sandra Foxall, together with our in-house talent, have all treated us to a wonderful range of pieces to play. We didn't always make it, due to adverse weather and especially the treacherous ice-rink which the car park always turns into in winter.

Probably our first public performance, certainly for a very long time, was a slot at the invitation of St. John's to perform at their Michaelmas Fair [2012], when a small group of us got together, rather nervously, to play to the assembled shoppers.

Special events during the year were also Moira Usher's conducting workshop in April, in which Moira worked with a group of guinea-pig wannabe conductors, each of us taking a turn with the baton and working on a selection of pieces, with the remaining members patiently playing for us. We all learnt a lot about conducting and, just as important, being conducted i.e. watch, don't talk, blow or otherwise interrupt the proceedings!

This was followed very shortly afterwards by Graham Danbury's annual playing day. In June we were treated to a concentrated session of playing Byrd with Sandra Foxall. These have attracted a number of visitors, who are always very welcome to join us.

Many thanks to all of those who make these meetings possible, be they the tutors who have travelled from far and wide to be with us, or those who help with chairs and refreshments and, not least, our Committee.

## **SUFFOLK**

*Ramblings....* We've had a great year so far. January saw us playing with the Marenzio singers for some two-choir pieces and obviously some swing as well - how could we not! Very handy having such wonderful singers close by. We did a scrummy Alessandro Scarlatti piece - he's a very much underrated composer, too much in his nephew's shadow. We've had Adam Dopadlik as our pastoral visitor which was fun - and he seemed to enjoy himself. More swing of course - why not?? Very handy having such a lively guy in the next county. John Allen came in June this year - to cover for Herself whilst She took the EROS final rehearsal in Ipswich for their concert that evening. Very handy having our own Recorder Orchestra on tap as it were - and the evening was well worth the trip into Ipswich. It included some swing of course. And so to the playing day in September. Wendy Pettit came down from Birmingham. She and She shared the day - and it was great fun. A vintage we think. We didn't know it was possible to play so many pieces and styles in one day! No swing this time - how odd. But Wendy brought composers with whom we're not so familiar- Arthur Butterworth and Ian Farquhar being just two. Very handy having such great people on the pastoral visitors list. We look forward to the next year with enthusiasm!