

## SRP BRANCH NEWS – WINTER 2015

### BATH

The branch continues to flourish and attract new members. However it has been a year of great change as Ann Lyall has retired as Musical Director after more than 20 years in the post.

The Bath branch was officially founded in 1970 under the baton of Dom Gregory Murray. The baton then passed to Jerry Jerrome and Philip Evry before Ann became the Musical Director and continued the fine tradition. During her time she has conducted the great majority of the monthly meetings as well as two playing days each year. Although Ann's main love is Renaissance music she introduced modern pieces too, and found arrangements that really did suit recorders. The Batheaston playing days were of special note as they attracted recorder players, other instrumentalists and many singers: the usual attendance approaching 90 people, many attending year after year. In recent years the large numbers enabled Ann to achieve her ambition of conducting both the Tallis and Striggio 40 part pieces. She has notched up a magnificent total of 17 of these Batheaston days, a great achievement. For many years she also conducted the Jerrome Consort, a smaller group that gives regular concerts and is affiliated to the SRP.

Ann will continue conducting some sessions both for the Bath branch and other nearby branches, so she has definitely not retired fully.

The coming musical year has already been arranged: in addition to the usual monthly meetings we shall have a visiting conductor, a members' conducting afternoon, a conducting workshop as well as Ann leading two monthly afternoons and her traditional Christmas Playing Day.



### BIRMINGHAM

Our 2014 – 2015 Season ended with the traditional Members' Concert and play through of much of the music that we have worked on this year. As is our custom, the pieces performed for the concert part of the afternoon ranged from ancient to modern: *Recercada 1* by Diego Ortiz, *Fantasia à 6* by Wilbye and *Ragatonic* by Roger Tempest. This last piece, which was composed for Ann Tempest's

birthday, was Roger's modern treatment of ragtime. It was certainly based on ragtime, but there were surprises – it's not very likely that Scott Joplin ever used 7/8 as a time signature!

As so often happens, there was not time to play all the music that we had practised, but members certainly enjoyed the wide variety of pieces that were played.

Caroline Jones has completed her first year as our Musical Director. She has already contributed a great deal to the branch by bringing her knowledge, enthusiasm and skill to our meetings.

The plans for our meetings in 2015 – 2016 include a varied selection of music: there are compositions by Schütz, Palestrina and Victoria as well as an arrangement of *Tea for Two*. There are arrangements of music by Mendelssohn, J.S. Bach, Grieg and Gabrieli. As if that wasn't enough *The Carman's Whistle* and *Lord Willobie's Welcome Home* are also on our list.

During the Autumn we practised a selection of Christmas music. Our December meeting will be a public performance of some of these pieces. We hope that this will do two things: firstly it should stimulate us to aim for the best standard of playing that we can achieve, and secondly we hope it will make more people aware of the interest and variety in good recorder music.

## **DORSET**

Dorset branch has had some memorable playing sessions over the last year.

The Christmas meeting, complete with decorated music stands, Chairman Sue's cakes and music chosen and conducted by Jean Kluver, provided a cheerful end to 2014.

"A 'Hangover' from Christmas" (before tea) and "New Start" (after tea) were Julia McKinley's themes for January 2015. Julia returned on 14<sup>th</sup> February with "If music be the food of love – music for St Valentine's Day". Not only was love the theme of the music, but Julia also brought home-made heart-shaped biscuits as a tea-time treat.

Baroque concerti formed the basis of Pete Willis's programme in March with examples by Pepusch, Boismortier and Handel. Sadly, this was Pete's penultimate visit to us as he will be hanging up his baton at the end of the year.

Jack Brothwell directed our Playing Day in April. His arrangements encompassed a diverse selection of pieces from Richard Farrant's, *Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake*, with which we commenced, to *Nellie the Elephant* (played at 100 trunk swings per minute) which ended the day. Jack used guitar accompaniment where appropriate and was generous with helpful tips on swung quavers and double dotting.

Mary Steele's May selection of mainly contemporary pieces included *Whirly-Jig* by Nicholas Wynne, based on the sound of an Appalachian weather vane. A successful sale of plants and baked items took place during the afternoon.

David Burgess set us the challenge of Grieg's *Triumphal Homage March, from Sigurd Josalfar Suite* (in ten parts including 'big' basses) in June, when he placed us around the hall in small choirs.

Maureen Haines battled her way to Dorset along the coastal roads of Sussex and Hampshire on a busy Saturday in July. With her she brought Monteverdi, Scheidt, Bach and Marshall, before sending us off for the summer holidays with *An Irish Suite* by Philip Thorby.

In 2016 we look forward to welcoming Helen Hooker to direct our April Playing Day and a first visit by Debbie Nichols, as well as return visits by our regular conductors.

If you are in Dorset on the second Saturday of the month (not August) do contact us; we would be delighted to see you. Our details are on the SRP website, with contact details also in this magazine.

## LONDON

The 2015 - 2016 season started quite unusually. Jo Brown, our MD, had arranged for her son Michael to conduct us and had arranged for the addition of six gambas to join us. The meeting opened with a near disaster when Jo told us that Michael was going to be delayed after being caught up in an enormous traffic tailback. However, the ever resourceful Jo just had time to grab a most interesting piece by Krommer which nearly all could manage. When Michael arrived after an hour we segued straight into two delightful pieces by Tomas Luis di Victoria with due attention to the word painting, and with an abbreviated tea break we had a very nearly full session.

## MID-HERTS



In July Graham Danbury retired as Musical Director. Mid-Herts SRP was founded by Herbert Hersom, who became its first Musical Director. When Herbert suffered a severe stroke in 1996, Graham stepped into the breach. He transferred the 36 feet of the branch library to his loft, dipping into it and augmenting it over the following years.

During his final session, Sue Cross, Chair, thanked Graham for all his hard work and dedication over the past 19 years and he was made an honorary life member of the branch. Members signed a specially designed card and presented Graham, who is as passionate about cricket as he is about the recorder, with a Jocelyn Galsworthy cricket print and an audio CD of Stevie Smith poems. Enid Holmes made a cake decorated with a recorder and members gave him a rousing three cheers.

## OXFORD

Oxford branch has a loyal following each month in the West Oxford community centre. Over the past year we've been lucky to have excellent conductors at all our monthly meetings. Judith Schmidt our Musical Director, conducted two consecutive meetings so that we could work on pieces by Lassus, Cipriano de Rore, Glen Shannon and Silcocks. This was much appreciated and satisfying.

Very much at the last moment Sheila Richards took our playing day in March when we played all British music. We even had the composer of *Fairclough's Fandango*, Nick Wynne, playing with us. I hope he was impressed with our rendition! Other conductors this year have included Debbie Nicholas, Steve and Ann Marshall, John Hawkes, Dick Little and for the first time Jackey Birch.

We meet on the third Saturday of each month from 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm, we also have a web page which is kept up to date by our treasurer Anthony Hall ([oxford@srp.org.uk](mailto:oxford@srp.org.uk)). If you're interested in further details about the group, do get in touch.

## SUFFOLK

*Ramblings.....*

Well, our playing day was a sell out - we had over 50 people and of course, the sun shone - it always does! Moira usually starts and ends the day, with our visitor sandwiched in either side of lunch. That way they can, if they wish, arrive for morning coffee and go at tea time, making it a less stressful day. Helen Hooker opted to arrive first thing which was really nice.

We had an early morning – early as in music not time of day - but it felt very varied. We had Parsons, Senfl, Byrd and Gabrieli. (You can guess that Moira did *not* do the Byrd). The afternoon was Marshall, Prokofiev and the march *Blaze Away*, arranged by Handscombe, so we all went away with an ear worm playing at marching speed.

Lunch was good - the village where we meet has bought its pub and 16 of us went there for lunch - excellent food with small enough portions requested so that we could still play in the afternoon!

In January we have a violinist and violist to play Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* with us. The only problem is that it's in E flat - and find me a recorder player who likes flats.....!

## WALES

Our fourth annual summer playing weekend was held in July at Paradise Farmhouse, Presteigne, Powys, and tutored by Alyson Lewin. Twenty players attended, with instruments including two great basses and two contras, so we were able to tackle Alyson's splendid work *Twixt Trent and Severn*, written for the 2015 Festival at Wolverhampton. An eleven-part recorder orchestra piece is rather outside our usual experience, but I thought it sounded good with very few players per part, and I loved playing the sopranino. We also tackled Byrd's Six-part Fantasy No.1, Schein's xix-part Canzon, Hassler's *Canzon duodecimi toni* and Giovanni Gabrieli's madrigal *Chiar' Angioletta*. Half the playing sessions are devoted to quintet playing, as the group splits neatly into four of them, and various pieces were chosen and played. Offenbach's *Can-Can* proved very popular and provided much merriment.



A feature of this weekend is the evening meals, held at various venues. This year we started with a barbecue. Rain had threatened all day but we were lucky and had a sunny evening for it. On the Friday we revisited Shobdon Airfield, where the Hotspur cafe gave us another lovely meal, and on the Saturday most of us took advantage of another beautiful evening to walk into Presteigne to try the new bistro, engagingly called The Duck's Nest.

In 2016 our event falls on July 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Helen Hooker has kindly agreed to come and be our tutor. If you play at least SAT and B recorders and would like to come, do drop me an email and I'll send you details.

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