

November 15<sup>th</sup> 2014

Playing Day with Pamela Flanagan.

The day dawned sunny for our annual playing day, and the cakes were baked. The hall was a hive of activity – everyone seems so keen to help with the furniture, teas and other essentials. Pamela arrived fresh off the plane from Dublin (well, actually, via a night in Weston-super-Mare) with a lovely selection of music.

We began by splitting into 2 choirs (having set up in the usual SATB format) and Pamela gave us **Hassler's** *Chi Vuol Veder*. We worked hard at getting a good balance and some effort went into the tuning issues of cold and different instruments. We gave a plausible performance before stopping for a quick comfort and drinks break.

After the brief interlude we looked at **Samuel Scheidt's** *Hymnus de Adventu Domini*. Pamela guided us through this work carefully and spent time explaining how it all fitted together and related to other works. We then had a brief look at one of the fugues from the Well Tempered Clavier, **Bach's** *number 4*, superbly arranged by Victor Eijhout. Again Pamela showed us how Bach had used material from other composers, and how cleverly the fugue form had been used. She talked at length and very interestingly about fugues and their history.

Then it was lunch break – a brief visit to a local hostelry although some chose to stay in the hall. After lunch we resumed the Bach fugue and enjoyed making a good sound with it. Following this we updated a few centuries, and after a brief description of how the music arose, Pamela gave us an arrangement of **Gounod's** *Funeral march of the Marionettes*, a piece made popular by Alfred Hitchcock. The basses worked hard at the pall-bearing rhythm, and the higher parts enjoyed playing the spooky melodies.

Then a fantastic tea of cakes, organised by Diana and Julia – and many thanks to all the rest of the crew who helped out with the refreshments. After the annual raffle, which raises money for the branch we resumed to play a final set of pieces, 3 of **Stanford's** *6 short Preludes and Postludes*. These were lovely to play and probably as lovely to listen to, and were skilfully arranged by Chris May. They were well worth another look at a later date. So the day came to a close and our thanks went to Pamela for giving us such an interesting and informative day of playing and learning about the music. We all hope that she can revisit Somerset sometime in the future.