

Saturday 16th March 2013

DEBBIE NICHOLAS

WE arrived at our usual home in Ruishton to find that it had been taken over by some West Gallery Players, and we were homeless. After a bit of frantic phoning round (thank goodness for smart phones!) we managed to secure a venue – and for the first time in history the whole of Somerset SRP were going to the pub! Although not the perfect venue, it was warm, drive, large enough for the assembled crowd and very welcoming – and this certainly beat the village hall car park. Well done, Nags Head, Thornfalcon, for being so understanding!

So, a little delayed, we began a lovely afternoon of playing under Debbie's baton. We began with a **Giga** written by a fairly local Baroque composer, *Chilcott*. After ironing out a few issues, we played it through very well, and hopefully the pub-goers enjoyed our performance. We then moved back a few years to *Tallis - O Nata Lux*, a simple but effective piece in 5 parts, which we split into 4 and 8 foot. Debbie also commandeered a few soloists to play a few bars as a small group. We followed this by a move to a swing type piece, *Paul Richards' Scarborough Finck*. There were some tricky sections, with each section of the ensemble taking a few bars 'solo' Luckily the tea arrived, so we took a break and enjoyed Vivien's delicious cakes. Another good point about meeting in a pub is the service – no one had to leave early to boil water or stay on after the break to wash up. After the tea break we continued with the Paul Richards' piece, and then moved onto 3 lovely medieval songs arranged by *Benjamin Thorn*. Debbie read the stories behind each one, which was quite interesting, and we enjoyed playing the 3 part pieces, originally written in the 13th century, **Three Cantigas**. They might have been improved with the addition of a drum, but were nonetheless fun to play. After 3 we moved to 2 (people begin to drift away from our group as the afternoon progresses) – now **2 Orchestral fugues** by *GF Handel*. We enjoyed these as they are very interesting and tuneful to play, and with 10 minutes of the afternoon left, Debbie gave us *Poulenc's L'Embarquement pour Cythere* – a beautiful piece which apparently describes a painting of the same name. So a successful end to a slight fraught afternoon, and it was lovely that Debbie was so patient with us. We hope to see you again soon, Debbie.

