

RECORDER SOCIETY REPORT 17th April 2010

Our conductor on this occasion was to have been Julia Mackinley, but her husband was taken ill, so Joyce nobly stepped into the breach.

The first piece was *Mille Regretz*, by Josquin des Pres (1440-1521) This is a beautiful, sad piece; not difficult, but with plenty of small details to work on. Having played it through, we worked through it backwards, paying attention to repeated notes and echoes. The final result was very pleasing.

Next came *Rhosymedre*, by Vaughn Williams (1872-1958) "A pretty tune with many interwoven parts" The piece is in 4/2 time, but Joyce conducted in 4/4 by splitting bars, thus making it easier to cope with the interwoven parts. Even so, some of us had problems with rhythms at first, but section playing soon got us organised, and we ended up with a pretty good rendition.

Tortoises, from *Dancing through the Undergrowth*, by Liz Sharma, was our first modern piece, taken from the Recorder magazine, Winter 2009. This was good fun (the tortoises were obviously "in the mood") and there was a debate about whether the quavers should be swung. Joyce decided it would be too complicated and instead we concentrated on dynamics,(plenty of these!) and a really sturdy bass anchor line.....but who knows, on another occasion we might try swinging the quavers as well.....

Leaping back to the past, we tackled Giles Farnaby's *Loth to Depart*, arranged by Paul Clark. In $\frac{3}{4}$ time, it consisted of a theme and variations, with lots of challenging semiquavers and scale passages and a very difficult bass part. Tenor 2 wasn't exactly run-of-the-mill either, so we romped through this before tea. Well actually we played the tune and one variation and demanded tea in order to brace ourselves for the rest of it!

Tea was lovely. Homemade cakes **and** biscuits provided by Judy and Mary. Thank you both.

Fortified by this, we tackled the other variations, then embarked upon *Fantasia*, written 19.6.1680 by Purcell. There are four short movements, slow, brisk, slow, quick/drag. The 'quick' was a challenge for most of us, veering as it did into the upper reaches of top Cs and Fs, with most of the accidentals in between. There were some dissonances, not always written by Purcell.

The final piece restored our confidence. *Ballad for a Beautiful Butterfly* by Alan Davis, a blind recorder player, is marked Andante poco mesto. Not **too** easy, but attractive and peaceful. Poco Mesto (sad) because the butterfly was short-lived, or maybe because the composer couldn't see it?

Many thanks to Joyce for organising and conducting an enjoyable afternoon's playing at short notice.

Gwyn Flitters