

18<sup>th</sup> April 2009 Debbie Nicholas

There were only 15 players at the April meeting (*at least 4 were involved with Mendip consort's concert in Exeter Cathedral*) but under the clear and precise direction of Debbie Nicholas we produced some well balanced and musical performances.

We began with a quiet and simple well known tune, **To a Wild Rose**, Arranged by Brian Bonsor. The rubato ending proved troublesome and in the final playing an extra descant was added so that the beautiful melody could be appreciated.

Then followed a serious study of the **Capriol Suite** by *Peter Warlock* or, as we discovered, Phillip Heseltine, who took his own life at the age of 36. Since this was an orchestral piece there were times when we had to sound more like orchestral instruments than recorders but it gave Sheila an opportunity to play the sopranino. The first of the group of dances, the Basse Danse, is slow and required smooth playing, followed by the Pavane where the tenors establish the rhythm of the crochet followed by 2 quavers which was taken up by each section at some time. The Tordian was written for pizzicato playing on the strings which required the recorders to play staccato throughout. There was a difficult timing at the end of the piece but with Debbie's direction we were successful. The Bransles was a very long movement with several key changes. Then followed the enchanting Pieds en l'air, the melody played by the descants and repeated by the trebles. The final dance, Mattachins, had the repeated rhythm of the Pavane but with increased speed came lightness.

In complete contrast we played an arrangement by **Paul Clark** of *Veni Creator Spiritus* by **Palestrina**. Originally there were 7 verses but only 4 were arranged. The plainsong verses in unison were most effective especially on the lower instruments which gave a monastic sound effect.

Jane provided a delicious assortment of cakes which fortified us to produce trumpet-like fanfares in the piece, *Sing Joyfully*, by **William Byrd**, based on Psalm 81 verses 1-4.

After such serious music, the *Liberty Bell* by **JP Sousa** gave some light relief. This fun march with well known tune we sight read extremely well and the only difficulty was the off beat accompaniment in all parts except the bass who kept a solid firm beat throughout.

To end the session another arrangement by **Paul Clark** of the well known folk song, *Blow the Wind Southerly*. Trebles, ignoring the beat, set their own speed in the opening bars with Debbie's experience of giving a clear strong beat we managed to give a creditable performance to end an enjoyable afternoon's performance.

By Ann Hankin