

October 18<sup>th</sup> 2008

## Playing Day with John Hawkes

As I collected John from Bristol airport a huge rainbow appeared in front of my eyes – a real feelgood factor, which could only bode well for the rest of the day. Arriving at the hall just outside Taunton we were met with a hive of activity – everyone in the Somerset branch willingly joins in and ‘does their bit’ and everyone seems to have their own niche, so no squabbling - , just all the jobs being carried out efficiently for a smooth running playing day. After coffee and biscuits we sat down and played through **Palestrina’s** *Sicut Cervus*. John outlined a few points and assessed the abilities of the group. We then tackled **Handel’s** *Concerto Grosso op 6 no 3*, learning each movement in turn and working on the tricky features. We toyed with having soloists, but in the end John decided not to use the ‘willing’ volunteers. It would have been quite effective, but probably also quite complicated! We had a short break to stretch our legs, take drink and change instruments before looking at the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Holberg Suite (Grieg)* – and the first suite/sweet of the day! We followed this by attempting John’s own work written for his SRP’s 40<sup>th</sup> birthday – *Celebration Overture*. There were some challenging sections which we attempted manfully, but it would be good to revisit it in the future. Then to lunch, beautifully prepared by Ann and the other Minehead friends! The whole day was in aid of buying a contra bass for the group in the future, so any lunch profit went towards this, as did the raffle which I then encouraged people to buy tickets for. Gwynneth had also bought a few plants along to sell in aid of funds, and they proved very popular. After lunch we resumed, with extra players as some had chosen only to attend the afternoon session, by playing **Willbye’s** *Draw on Sweet night* – another reference to sweets! We followed this by attempting **Pärt’s** *Summa* which had a number of interesting time changes or challenges! Before the tea break we played an arrangement of **Mozart’s** *Non Pui Andrai* - quite fun and in parts challenging. Tea and the raffle followed, with some sweet and beautiful cakes made by members of the committee and served by Mary and Diana. After tea we revisited the **Grieg**, playing the other 2 movements. Finally another suite – this time **Dennis Bloodworth’s** *Suite Pastiche*. This consist of 4 dance movements which are fun to play and well suited to the recorder. We were all flagging after a long day, but had thoroughly enjoyed our visit by John and wished him well for his return journey to Newcastle and hoped we would see him again soon. After the ‘tidying team’ had finished and gone I was left to lock up the hall and turn off the lights – an oasis of peace, but still echoing from the walls and within my head with the lovely variety of music we had played during the day. It was also a successful day financially which had to be a good thing as our funds are now growing well! Perhaps we can have another rainbow at the next meeting in November when Steve Marshall will undoubtedly take us through the Jazz repertoire and lead us into our festive jollities which we always enjoy in December.