

Report on Somerset SRP workshop held on May 19th 2018.

Evelyn Nallen – English Baroque

We have never held a workshop in Somerset before, but some of our members thought it would be a good idea and help to fulfil the role of educators. So, it was with some trepidation that we arranged a day of English Baroque, with Evelyn Nallen. Sadly a few of our branch thought it would be too difficult/not their thing/ not for them. This was absolutely not the case, and Evelyn managed to skilfully involve everyone, whatever their history of music making, whatever their ability or whatever instrument they played – although the day was weighted towards alto players as this was the main solo instrument of the era, but those playing tenor, descant and bass were encouraged throughout. We also had the opportunity to welcome some visitors from other areas and other branches, which is always nice.

On to the grist of the day – we began the day with Evelyn telling us a little about how music was so different in each of the European countries, with many (often amusing) slides to illustrate the point). We then went on to learn about appoggiaturas, trills and other ornaments. This involved relearning some fingering to make them easier to execute on the recorder. We also had to relearn the meaning of the tempo indications at the start of pieces, the importance of the bass line in baroque music, how popular music could be improved by the addition of ornaments and how to play a very ornamented version of a Handel sonata. So much to learn, and Evelyn was a fantastic teacher and orator. The whole day flew past and was thoroughly interesting and we all left feeling totally inspired.

Many thanks in particular go to Judy and Mary who organised the pre-workshop essential coffees, and to Miriam and Vivienne who sorted out the much need tea and cake break in the middle of the afternoon. But the biggest thanks must go to Evelyn for such an interesting and inspiring workshop.