

Saturday 19th January Frances Webb

For our first meeting of the new year we welcomed Frances Webb to Ruishton (not to Somerset – she is a local musician and proud of her Somerset Heritage). We began the afternoon with a version of JS Bach's fugue in G major, which worked very well for recorders, having plenty of interest for all 4 parts. Frances encouraged us to work on the tricky sections, but the overall 'finished' piece would have been a credit to JSB.

We then moved onto John Willbye, a Fantasia for 6 instruments – just as well, as the attendance today was very good, and Frances had underestimated this with her music – no problem as most people were happy to share. Again we worked at the tricky sections and harmonies of the Willbye, before giving it a credible performance.

The final piece in this half a well-known piece that Frances had expertly arranged by Jacques Offenbach – the Barcarolle. Offenbach was born on the 20th June 1819, so Frances thought it appropriate to celebrate his bi-centenary by playing this lovely piece from his Tales of Hoffmann. We worked quite hard on it, and the overall sound was very pleasing, before enjoying tea and lovely cakes provided this month by Elsa and Barbara.

Suitably fortified by tea and cake, we then tackled The Leaves be Green by William Byrd. This proved to be quite a challenge, mostly because of the time signature changes, but after some serious work on some of the sections we managed to play the whole piece without too many disasters.

The final piece of the afternoon was lighter and somewhat easier than the Byrd, but did involve some instrument changes. This was 4 Sea Songs by Bruce Pennick. The songs were fairly straightforward (after the Byrd!) and we enjoyed playing the drunken sailor at speed to end a lovely afternoon.

Many thanks, Frances, and I hope you can pop down the road to conduct us again soon., with another lovely selection of music.