

19th November 2011 Debbie Nicholas

We began today's meeting with a 'seasonal' favourite – a couple of weeks late, but Handel's firework music is always a success. We managed to learn all 5 movements and then had time to perform them, which we did quite creditably. Then Debbie guided us through the Agincourt Song – and arrangement of an anonymous piece (very traditional) by Paul Harvey. This has been set in many arrangements, including a famous one by William Walton, but the Paul Harvey version was perfect for recorders, and enhanced by Mary's drum playing. Keeping in the medieval era we then moved on to Gaspar Sanz's Spanish airs and dances – again, these popular tunes of their time have been set for orchestra, most notably in Rodrigo's guitar concerti, but the recorder arrangement by Christopher Ball works a treat, with plenty of interesting music for all parts. After a delicious tea, served and provided by Diana and Mary (F), we looked at 4 pentatonic songs by Throne – written for recorders as the composer writes a lot of solo and ensemble music. These songs had a feel of Asia about them, and were quite straightforward to sight read. We followed this with another arrangement of a 14th century tune – Á Chantar, arranged by Steve Marshall – a really good arrangement even if the basses do have to have huge lung capacity! Our final new piece was Das Glaut Zuspeyer, by Senfl. This was an arrangement of cathedral bells – quite interesting, and I should imagine quite fun to listen to, but very easy to get lost in the bars of repeated Cs. We finished the afternoon with another play through of the Agincourt song, this time with Ann taking the drum role. Thank you very much, Debbie, for a very interesting and varied afternoon of music, and for patiently guiding us through it.