

20th October 2012 Anne Martin

Everybody gathered for coffee in anticipation of a good days' playing again in Ruishton. Shortly we welcomed Anne Martin to our group, and she told us that we would start with something fairly straightforward – always a good idea, waking everyone up and blowing away the cobwebs. Anne had chosen **Thomas Morley's *Nolo Mortem Peccatoris***, a gentle piece which we learnt to play quite quickly. We then moved on to **Byrd** – and 2 very different Fantasias. Both were in 6 parts, but the first, in F, Anne explained to us later was an experiment in making music for its own sake, and Byrd had used a mathematical formula to arrange his ideas, based around the number 6. The piece was much more interesting when we understood the thinking behind it. The second was a later foray into Fantasia writing, and thus more complicated (and difficult). The chosen key this item was G, and Byrd was employing some of his tricky rhythms which he used for great effect in his later music. Anne finished the morning by giving a short talk about Byrd and his fantasias, which was very interesting.

We broke for lunch, and when we returned we moved to the Baroque era, playing **Handel's *Overture for St. Cecelia's Day*** (coming up shortly). Once we mastered the tricky and exposed sections it went quite well. We then jumped forward to the present day, and a great (in my opinion!) piece by **Lance Eccles - *The Planets' Feet***. Although we only played two movements of this, Venus had hints of the more famous Planets' Suite by Gustav Holst, and both movements were both fun and interesting to play.

A lovely tea and superb cakes were then enjoyed, thanks to Felicity and Diana (with help from other members of the branch) and the raffle was successfully drawn. We then reconvened and played 2 movements from **Grieg's *Holberg Suite***, the Sarabande is quite a beautiful, graceful piece, and the Gavotte and Mussette caused some geographical problems, but was successfully navigated eventually. Anne gave us a lot of hints on how to play more tunefully and gently, and taught us some interesting fingerings. We finished the afternoon by playing an arrangement by Anne herself of **Erskine Butterfield's *3 Jazz Flavours***. These were all based around a type of butter (look at the composer's name!) – Salt butter, sugar butter and peanut butter – so a fun way to conclude the afternoon's playing.

We thank Anne for a very interesting and informative day, and hope that we will meet her again soon.