

Saturday 21st January 2017

Robin Powell

A wonderful crowd of Somerset members and friends came to Ruishton to welcome in the New Year and to spend the afternoon being educated by Robin. We began with a rather sad piece, *Lord Willobie's Welcome Home*, by **William Byrd**. Robin explained that the minor key hints at the way Lord Willobie was welcomed home – ie. In a coffin. A lovely piece to play with plenty for everyone.

We then moved onto another early English composer – **Orlando Gibbons**, and his *Goe from my Window*. This had some challenging music particularly for the bass department, who did a sterling job. As with the Byrd, this piece consisted of a theme and variations.

Before tea we played some straightforward *Elizabethan Dances*, in an arrangement by **Wyatt**. They were fairly self-explanatory, although we were hoping that Robin would demonstrate the dance moves! They were arranged from part books from the library of Lord Lumley, written about 1560.

Tea was wonderfully prepared by Mary and Miriam, with an excellent choice of cakes.

After tea we worked at *Fugue on 2 themes* by **Haydn**, which, although being a string piece originally, worked very well on recorders. Some people had by now changed instruments (always a good idea!) and so the challenging parts were again shared around with the basses having more fun. Fugues are always written in a way in which everyone gets an equal share of the cake, so a great piece to work on in this large group.

The final challenge of the afternoon was the first movement of **Gounod's** *Petite symphony*, another well thought out work with plenty to do for everyone. I think we might have been flagging by now, and it was at times quite a struggle, but we did manage to complete the piece with some degree of success and a large amount of patience on Robin's behalf.

It was lovely to welcome Robin and his wife, Alison, to Somerset, and we hope he returns to us again soon. Thank you Robin, for an entertaining afternoon of music making.