

We knew we would be in for a good day of music-making when Moira agreed to come and conduct our branch in (not-so-sunny) Somerset. We attracted a good group of players, a mix of members and visitors, which was good to see. Also a few desperate apologies from some members who sadly were incapacitated.

However, the hall quickly filled up and warmed up, especially as Moira immediately had us rearranging the chairs to become a two choir consort. We began with the beautiful *a Song called Trumpettes* by **Robert Parsons**. After working on the tricky sections Moira told us about Parsons himself and a little about his life. This was a feature of the day – Moira was very informative about all of the composers and the music, and I feel that we all went away with vastly increased knowledge.

We then moved on to an arrangement by Moira of **Viadana's Canzona la Padouna**. Although some of us have played this recently, this was a slightly different arrangement, and Moira's approach was, as usual, refreshing. She was particularly enthusiastic in the offbeat section which feels like a syncopated 6/8. We were encouraged to vacillate! The enthusiasm rubbed off onto us and we played this section with great vigour.

We remained in two choir formation for an unusual 2-choir piece. This was much more modern – **Stanford's Coelis ascendit hodie**. Although I personally have played some beautiful orchestral works by Stanford, this was new to both myself and the rest of the players. It was a lovely piece to play and interesting to hear about Stanford's influence on 20th century composers.

We took a short break and then tackled the **Geminiani concerto grosso, op. 3 no 4**. Again, some of us have played this before, but it's a fantastic piece to play especially under Moira's baton. She makes even the tricky bits sound lively and musical, and her enthusiasm is contagious. We gave a 'performance' of the entire concerto before heading off to our local village pub for lunch.

After lunch we moved from concerto to string quartet, this time a work by **Haydn**. Again, the tricky sections were ironed out and the whole quartet sounded pretty much as Haydn may have anticipated. There were the usual 4 movements of a quartet in sonata form with many repeats, but the geography was patiently explained and we were able to give a 'performance' prior to the tea break.

Tea on playing days is an especially high feast. Instead of the usual 2 or 3 cakes we have a large number- and the choice is almost impossible as they are all delicious. They were expertly served by Diana and Felicity, who need a special mention for all the hard work they do on days like this. While tea was taken we drew the many raffle prizes and a number of people went home happily with a bottle of wine, cider or other tasty treat.

Sadly to the final session of the day, and a little bit more relaxed. Firstly we played *Flapper Days*, a medley of hits from the 20s arranged by **Stan Davies**. It's always fun to play this type of music as a bit of light relief and also to see how many people could sing the words! The final piece for the afternoon was **Kerry Mills' Whistling Rufus**. Great fun to play and nothing much to cause consternation after the challenges of earlier in the day, so we just enjoyed playing it through a couple of times.

Thank you, Moira, for a fantastic day of music, variety, information and excellent leadership. We really hope that you will be able to revisit in the future and I know that we have all taken a lot away from the day to improve our playing.