

What has Somerset Branch been up to since the lockdown?

Our members live at a large geographical distance, due to the size of the county of Somerset, so even meeting in small groups in a park has been impossible for most of our members. So, thank goodness for the internet! Most of us had never heard of Zoom before March, but we have now embraced it on a number of occasions.

We have held a committee meeting via Zoom, an AGM via the same medium, but far more excitingly – a number of recitals.

We began on a wet Saturday afternoon in June with a varied recital given by Andrew Collis. He entertained us with music as widely different as The Big Baboon and some of Der Fuliten Lusthof. This was Andrew's 'tour of the world' concert, which whetted our appetites for travel. We thought to invite a few friends and fellow recorder players as guests, and this was very successful, so we continued with the same format for our next recital.

In August our soloist was the lovely Emma Murphy – again a very varied recital, and again a lovely way of explaining the music to the assembled group. Emma's recital included a lot of music inspired by the natural world, something that has been embraced in this odd year of 2020. It also included a wonderful piece composed by Emma herself, Then and Now, which expressed how our busy lives calmed down in the lockdown.

September should have seen Marg Hall as our Playing Day conductor, instead she offered to put on her short video of how she became involved in writing beautiful music for the recorder – and how to make a mug! The music was ably performed by one-man quartet, Nicholas Epton. The music played was all composed by Marg, and gave us hope that we could all play it in real life one day. She happily took questions at the end of the video, and realised that she had something in common with our Chair.

So to our October meeting – and we were privileged this time to entertain Michelle Holloway on recorder and Chris Roberts on guitar – a winning combination. The guitar complements the recorder so well, and we could imagine a lute being played. Chris and Michelle seemed to love playing together so much that their concert had to be long enough to fit in all of their favourite music – what a treat for all the of Somerset contingent and their ever-growing list of welcome guests. We loved hearing the chat before and after the music, and the special arrangements that the duo played.

If you haven't heard any of these performers, I can recommend that you look at which SRP is hosting them and ask to be included.

We have one more event to look forward to in 2020, hosting Tabea Debus and some of her pupils. We are looking forward to this exciting event, and are happy to include any interested parties as guests.

What will 2021 bring? Hopefully a chance to get our recorders out and play together again. The musical inspiration has been given, the urge to make lovely music together has grown, and mostly, the cake recipes have been honed...