**Saturday 25th February 2023**

The programme that Frances challenged us with:

*Steve Marshall Funky*

*Schmelzer Sonata a 5*

*Byrd Sellenger’s Round*

*Byrd Fantasia no 1*

*Steve Marshall Chromatic and Silly*

We welcomed Frances Webb back to the branch, a regular conductor who always brings a lovely selection of music, and we had quite a lot of participants, which makes for a great sound.

Frances started the afternoon with one of Steve Marshall’s pieces – Funky. This was fairly straightforward (as Steve says under the title!) and fun to play.

By contrast we moved onto Schemelzer, the Austrian composer better known for his Sonata à 7. Frances had chosen Schmelzer as 1623 marks the 400th anniversary of his birth. His Sonata à 5 is split into 4 lively and even livelier sections, before closing with a very short but beautiful 5 bar coda. Despite some odd time signatures, Frances guided it through the work with great skill.

Then onto Byrd – whose 400th anniversary of his demise is celebrated widely this year (also 1623). We started with the well known Sellenger’s Round – a piece broken into convenient chunks, or variations, on the popular folk song of the day and known by most of those present.

Tea was provided by James and Mauritse and beautifully served by them

We then moved onto Byrd’s Fantasia no 1 – lesser known than the other fantasia’s in this set (most of which we have played before), but none the worse for that. There were some interesting rhythms and cross rhythms, very typical of Byrd’s music and I feel that we gave it a fair performance, with the added bass line from the contra and great basses.

We ended the afternoon as we had begun – with 2 more pieces by Steve:
Chromatic No 5 and Silly No 6 in the same set as Funky no 4; Chromatic had some interesting fingering changes, followed Silly by which was just that, and explored Steve’s love of Jazz, plus had us all in fits of laughter at the end when Frances took Steve at his word in the accell!

Thank you for a really lovely afternoon, Frances –we actually left in the light and with the lovely selection of music wandering around our heads.