Saturday 24th February 2024

We welcomed Julia McKinley back to Ruishton to conduct our afternoon of playing and also welcomed 2 new and 3 returning members, so the group was a good size. This meant that we could attempt an 'orchestra' piece – more of which later.

Julia began the afternoon with **Dainty Fine Bird by Orlando Gibbons**. This was a lovely gentle start to the afternoon and gave us all a chance to warm up thoroughly. It also began the natural theme of music that Julia had chosen to bring.

Julia then asked us all to play a D Chromatic scale, slowly, so that we could work out the unusual enharmonic notes. This helped us to play the next piece **John Bennett's the Trysting Tree**. Again, an interesting piece, written in the time when recorders weren't popular, but this expertly arranged.

Now to the orchestra piece – and luckily those players present had the contra bass to sopranino recorder range. As I stood at the side playing the contra, I could hear a very smooth sound from the rest of the orchestra as they worked their way through **Anne Martin's Journey to Skye** – one of the 2 mass playing pieces from the 2023 festival. It was great to be able to pick out familiar tunes, and also to feel the lilting of the boat.

Tea and cakes were provided by Vivienne and Joyce and welcomed by all.

Then to **Arne's Thou soft flowing river** – very apt in light of the excesses of rain the country has experienced lately. This piece was set to a poem by Robert Carrick and illustrates the River Avon at Stratford. As with much of today's music, not only was there a natural theme, but Julia also read the associated poetry.

Our final piece was recently written by **Michael Graham**, for his visit to Julia's branch, Wessex. This was entitled **Hast to the wedding and In Winchester there was a wedding**. It was fun to play, and interesting in all the parts. It also rounded off a really lovely afternoon of playing, so many thanks to Julia who seemed to pitch the music exactly right for the attendees on the day.