

West Gallery Workshop and Evening Service, St. Mary's, Wanstead, 20th May, 2018



Our long planned West Gallery Workshop took place on 20th May in the lovely Georgian Church of St. Mary, Wanstead. This event had originally been planned for 10th December, 2017 but had to be cancelled because snow. Certainly no sign of snow this time, it was a glorious day. After consultation with Dr. Francis Roads we had decided to celebrate Oak Apple Day, or Restoration Day to showcase West Gallery music. This is usually celebrated on 29th May, but owing to other commitments this was the nearest day we could manage. About 30 singers and instrumentalists gather and The Rev. Dr. Gordon Giles joined us to play his flute and also take the service – no mean feat!



West Gallery music is the music of town and country churches between about 1700 and 1850. It is very different from the more familiar cathedral music, in having been composed specifically for amateur singers, who often used instrumental accompaniment from string and wind instruments. It is not technically challenging, and vocal ranges are limited. Mostly it is in four parts, but three part music for SAB voices is available. Much of it is lively, and influenced by the rhythm of folk dance. It is as suitable for modern worship as it ever was.



Francis had chosen a very varied selection of music for this occasion including a version of the National Anthem taken from Colby Manuscripts IOM, which was been found in several Scottish 18th century printed collections from which it appears to have reached the Isle of Man. Since it was also

