

Review of HISS 2018

Catherine Harris

I feel very lucky to have been able to participate in HISS this year. There were (very unusually) seven 'bursary barockers' and we'd all love to return next year. With no administrator taking part in the course this year, we were all kept very busy with copious amounts of photocopying in between various classes and activities. However, this just added to the family feeling with all of us helping out where necessary and having a thoroughly good time. In fact, we are all planning on meeting up for an 'early music sesh' in different parts of the country every couple of months.

I attended *Natural Voices* as my progressive, run by Vivien Ellis, who was wonderful and really tailored the sessions around our group. I'm hoping to start a choir this coming year and she gave me lots of ideas and showed me some places I could find resources. We also tried many things I've never done before, such as learning by ear (a welcome song at the beginning of the sessions) and lots of improvisation – adding in harmonies over/under a given tune as well as making songs up from nothing. These morning sessions really set me up for the rest of the day, when I explored classes run by other tutors.

I enjoyed being able to borrow a Baroque bow to use with my cello in the Baroque string sessions, and really enjoyed Amelie giving us a demonstration of figured bass on her cello! This linked very nicely with Graham's figured bass/continuo session on the harpsichord. There was no feeling that we had to attend a certain session based on our primary instrument, which I really enjoyed as I felt I could pick and mix sessions and find what was right for me. There were several sessions which allowed us to try new instruments: I played a viol and attempted to play a cornett (annoyingly without much success!).

I'd hugely recommend the tunes sessions in the bar in the evenings. I only managed to participate in one on the last night because I was so exhausted from the packed days, but I found out too late they are definitely worth joining in! Next time I'll bring my recorder too. The tutors concert was a fantastic array of talent, I enjoyed every minute, and the musical banquet was equally entertaining although in a slightly different way... I was crying with laughter by the end!

The location is a great place for a summer school. Bishop Burton College is surrounded by beautiful Yorkshire countryside, and the college itself has an equestrian centre, lots of sports fields and a petting zoo among other things. The accommodation and food was good (especially at the musical banquet), and there were plenty of classrooms and other spaces for the sessions and any extra music making we decided to do.

I hope to keep in touch with the rest of the bursary students, I really enjoyed making music with them during the week and hopefully some of us will be able to return next year. Thank you so much Graham for inviting me on HISS, I wouldn't have been able to attend (or even know about it!) without the bursary, and I hope I will be able to come again in the future.