

HISS 2016 Review – Natalie D Kershaw

I was so pleased to be able to attend HISS again. As soon as I walked in, I was welcomed warmly, met friends that I had made the previous year, made new ones; it was lovely. I am so grateful to Graham and Sammi, for allowing me, for a second time, to attend using the bursary.

The main issue here was that there was so much choice for the sessions that it became difficult to choose what to do! However, every tutor, and I can't stress this enough, was so welcoming and approachable. They allowed you to decide what you wanted to do and how to get what you needed from the week. If there was a session you couldn't make, they were very willing to talk to you about it afterwards. As a woodwind player, I still managed to attend sessions that were for strings just because I was interested in the topic. The tutor made me feel very welcome and made slight adjustments so that I could play the music on my own instrument so I wasn't left out. I learnt so much from them and their experiences. Every tutor has a wealth of knowledge and expertise which they are open with and willing to share. Most of my sessions were with Mary and I just couldn't have asked for a better woodwind tutor. I really enjoyed the improvisation sessions with Stewart who makes relatively difficult subjects very easy to understand.

I was happy with my accommodation and the catering staff provided me with the diet that I needed. There isn't much cutlery in the accommodation kitchens, however, so it is worth bringing your own. Besides that, the rooms were clean and well maintained. Be aware that there are stair cases in the accommodation blocks and no lift, so if you have a lot of instruments, or heavy ones, you may need to make a couple of trips. Or, ask for a ground floor room if you need it.

The social side was ever present and at the end of the day, we all met in the bar and just played. This provided a lot of entertainment and hilarity! Everyone on the course was good-natured and willing to share their knowledge and experiences. The banquet was fun and full of entertainment from bawdy songs to lutes. It was a fantastic time and I have found a great network of music lovers.

The concert at the end of the week was a great time to hear and see what everyone had been working on and it was a treat. Everybody is included and everyone found a way of contributing something.

Thank you again. I hope to see you soon at some point!