

Review from first time attendee Enid Crowe:

Just wanted to give you some feedback from my first experience of HISS this summer. Overall I had a wonderful experience and it has transformed my playing or at least given me the tools to do that.

PROGRESSIVE

I really liked the way that this was structured. I have been to summer schools before where you are split into one to a part consort playing, have to choose your own music and the tutors circulate so most of the time you have nobody with you. It was very good to be able to get the music beforehand.

I cannot praise this class and the teaching enough. Having had my confidence ground down in recent years, this restored it. I had tension-related problems (tendonitis) and communicated this to Zan prior to the class as I didn't want to hold the class back. Not only did she listen to me and take on board my concerns at this point, but she also helped me immeasurably through the week in dealing with the issues and incorporated it into the class teaching. I was stretched and stimulated by the class but at no point was I made to feel uncomfortable and in fact I was given support and my confidence came on in leaps and bounds throughout the week. I really liked the way that we all played together, we had the teacher with us for the whole time and we were able to work in depth on a small number of pieces. This gave it continuity and a sense of purpose. The fact that I had the confidence that I did to play with the class in the final concert says it all as far as I am concerned. I have plenty in my "doggy bag" to work on for the next year!

OTHER SESSIONS

There was a great choice of sessions and I took full advantage of this. The only one I did not get to was brass but that was more because of my tendonitis. I really enjoyed playing the recorder and I particularly enjoyed the folk sessions with Stewart. In fact, the link with folk music and early music was one of the reasons why I chose this course. Coming from Northern Ireland my experience of traditional music has been a very conservative one where the types of instruments used have become prescriptive so it was really nice to be able to play.

CONCERTS

The concerts during the week were great and it was a wonderful experience to be able to play in the final concert on the Friday. Loved the Gabrielli!

SOCIAL

I have had bad experiences at other summer schools but how different was HISS! Everybody was really friendly and welcoming. My partner Ian had travelled with me and he felt welcome as well and - trust me - this has not always been our experience! I was delighted to be able to play (for the first time - see above comment!) in the ceilidh band on the first night and I loved the tunes sessions in the bar. The book of tunes is a great resource and I am getting great use out of it at home. I have to say that I particularly enjoyed the banquet- the food was great and the entertainment was exceptional!

SHORTIES

The shorties are an excellent idea. It gives participants a chance to share expertise as well as the tutors. From my point of view, it gave me my first chance to present some research that I had been working on. One thing I would say is that the timings were a bit of an issue in that they tended to overrun. I would suggest maybe getting one of the student tutors to monitor this by indicating the ten minute mark and winding up at the end. I have to say though I appreciated the flexibility in rescheduling mine.

ACCOMMODATION, BOOKING ETC

Booking was easy. The accommodation was very good. I particularly liked the setting as I love animals! It was handy to have all the teaching rooms in one block like that and the whole campus was very compact. The food was good and the bar was great craic. I also thought that the course, accommodation etc was excellent value for money.

Thanks again.

See you next year.