

Sophie Hampton HISS 2015 review

Apologies for not completing the questionnaire whilst at HISS. I simply could not seem to find a minute spare, due to the wonderful programme, impromptu music making and stimulating conversation! Had I completed it I would have ticked the 'strongly agree' box for every question. I will try to sum up my feelings.

This was my 4th Year at HISS, and yes it was, as others have said, the most wonderful, successful and friendliest yet. Whilst walking on the cliffs on the last morning we bumped into another couple of HISSERS one of whom said to me – 'I feel part of something bigger' . . . this too is how I feel. It has become like a massive family reunion, without the tensions that might possibly involve (!), but with a warm glowing sense of togetherness and fun. Like all families it continues to grow! I have learnt so much. For me it is amazing that I can now play many tunes by ear, whereas I used to rely on the dots in the wonderful HISS tune book when joining in the tunes in the bar sessions. Many of the tunes have now become internalised and it is now increasingly easy for me to acquire more. This process has been helped by attending the fabulous progressive sessions with Stuart (joining forces with Jacob) which has developed my understanding of the structure of common (and less common) grounds. It was so rewarding working as part of the group to compose simple tunes and then to play them with the lute accompaniment.

Working in the folk band with Mary and Stewart to learn and arrange tunes was also great fun. I found it hard to choose between Mary and Stewart's classes for the progressives, and although I missed out on the Corelli sessions which I heard were excellent, Mary's consort classes, wind coaching and individual tips were superb. Whilst I did not sign up as a singer, Vivien is an inspirational and inclusive tutor and I felt welcome and captivated by her session on Hildegard of Bingen. Also Viv's singing walk to Scarborough beach was a wonderful new addition to the course. She even managed to arrange brilliant sunshine for the walk (see attached photo). As ever, the tutors concert was a jaw droppingly impressive display of talent linking the weeks themes whilst also being fun. It set the bar very high for course participants who performed the following night in the bar and at the banquet – but that too was a thoroughly enjoyable and varied programme. The final concert on Friday was a great celebration of the week and chance for us all to hear what we had been missing out on in our evening slots – Unfortunately it is not possible to be in 2 places at the same time. The medieval band was awesome!

I have come away from the course with so many great memories, and also with Jacob and Susanna's CD to listen to and Stewart's Session Tunes Book to keep me busy learning more new tunes until next Summer's HISS. As well as continuing to play with local recorder groups having acquired some new techniques, I now feel empowered to attend folk sessions locally.

A massive THANK YOU to HISS.

Looking forward to next year

Sophie Hampton

