

Flutes at the Barns

Course Administrator, 30 Whitecroft, St Albans, Herts AL1 1UU UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: +44 (0) 1727 765511 Mob: + 44 (0) 7976 613750

E-mail: flutecourse@pipeblower.com Web: www.pipeblower.com

Diary of Summer 2007

Written by Lucy, Linda, Stephen, Sarah, Hazel, Ros, Christine, Sandy and John,
abridged by Zoë

Thursday 12th July

Every year I drive 200 miles south to live in a cottage in the middle of a field... why, you may ask!? I walk through the door and I see faces old and new – John and Stephen are faces I'm pleased to see, and Hazel is someone new and I'm excited about getting to know. Gradually more people arrive and the wine is opened and the cakes are eaten and the music begins... I sit in the sitting room and listen to the chit-chat and I smile to myself... on the FATB course am I totally happy and my flute/music obsession is understood! It's wonderful to be back!

Friday 13th July

The course started in earnest with different exercises including my favourite – harmonics! Though I've 'done' Flutes at the Barns three times now I like the fact that there's always something new to learn! Moving on to ensemble playing was pleasurable – such a nice way of getting to know people.

The morning went very quickly and it didn't seem long after breaking for Lucy's lovely flapjack and coffee that we got stuck into lunch! There was only time for the briefest of rests before getting stuck into the afternoon session but the energy started flowing back into the fingers quite easily!

Today was another day of great exercises, great group playing, much fun, laughs and serious fluting. Food is equally great and plentiful. As usual exercises are advantageous and need practice at home, but there's nothing like practice here with others in a similar situation. Anyway, full of compliments, good intentions and intent of coming again in the near future!

A large gin and tonic was consumed quickly to calm myself after playing short solo at the end of the day. Time for a sit down, call home and change before going out for dinner: no danger of hunger being an issue on this course. A relaxing evening was spent chatting... oh yes, must stop eating chocolate brownies!

Saturday 14th July

I'm beginning to feel the sounds I'm making are vaguely flute-like! I'm getting really good at faking in flute choir – but even better at picking up again when the notes and rhythms fall back into my compass. Zoë gave really great advice to improve my high notes! All Flutes Plus came – really proud that I have resisted spending loads of money YET!

Lunch in the sunshine – seize the day! Having spent two days so far, eating fantastic meals thanks to Jacci, and chocolate goodies from fellow players, it came as no surprise that Zoë felt we needed a lesson on 'support' – we did find our diaphragms eventually! 'Colours' – well, Lucy had already demonstrated how to play orange without burning your fingers, so we were half way there; with Zoë's patient help we managed the colours of the rainbow until we were all purple in the face. Then we had fun trying out flutes

for the rich and famous, thanks to All Flutes Plus. Quite a lot of silver and gold lying about, considering that the Thieving Magpie was in full flight!

The evening commenced with champagne, raising glasses to everyone! The sun was shining and we went on to enjoy a barbecue; we were all relaxed, starting Zoë's six-part quiz. The weekend has been an indulgence of flute playing, delightfully sincere company, exhilarating conversation into the early hours and super food! This has been my first flute course, but it won't be my last. Hope to see some of you next year!

Sunday 15th July

Luxury – an extra half hour in bed! This was rewarded with cooked breakfast thanks to Jacci. The class involved playing scales in different rhythms and in harmony – much nicer to vary ones practice! The flute choir was great and involved working on some pieces which will have a piano accompaniment. Our hard work was rewarded with coffee and flapjack! After more flute choir items – during which time some of us got called away to practice with Rachael – we came together to practice the items with the piano which we had worked on before coffee. This was followed by lunch and a good natter!

This, I find, is a very sad time, when one of these excellent courses comes to a close. It has all been said before – super people with a common aim, to refine their playing. I think I shall repeat that which I said a few years ago: this has been a wonderful few days, super company, super music, another time that I shall always remember.

Thank you Zoë.