

SUMMER SCHOOL REVIEWS

If you have never attended any theosophical events, you may be curious to know what goes on or wonder what everyone gets up to. Here are some reviews from participants and from the Director of the Summer School.

SUMMER SCHOOL 2016

When I received the leaflets and the letter outlining directions to the venue, I began to feel a heightened excitement about the quickly approaching Summer School at Bristol University on 6th August. I checked out the Wills Hall residential site on google and what a distance it appeared that I had to cover by rail from Durham. The travel, however, was the only hardship I experienced during a fantastic week. On leaving the train at Temple Meads, I bumped into a fellow student who became my constant companion throughout the week and shared a taxi to Wills Hall. We checked in at the registration office and after receiving our keys and directions made our way to our rooms. I had a very clean and decent room ensuite and it was very close to the Conference Hall where most of the lectures took place. At 6pm we had our first evening meal and it was at this point that I met someone else who for the rest of the week I accompanied to Yoga each morning. I found the meals to be of very good quality and a decent variety of choice and the staff were very attentive too. The Grand Dining Hall with a high ceiling, exquisite wood panelled walls and beautiful chandeliers was reminiscent of a scene from a Harry Potter movie.

After signing up for the various activities throughout the week, following the welcome and address by the Chairman, I purchased several books on esotericism and related subjects. I retired early that first evening following my long trip, to be ready for Yoga at the early start of 7am the next morning. After breakfast I returned for meditation before the first lecture of the day, given by Bhupendra Vora on 'The Divine Wisdom of the Upanishads'. We shared our thoughts over coffee before congregating with our chosen study groups. As always we were spoiled for choice but I opted for Ted Capstick's 'A Practical Introduction to Esoteric Psychology and Astrology'. All of the topics on offer were very much in line with the theme of this year's Summer School 'Divine Wisdom'. Following lunch at 1pm we made our way to our chosen groups for the afternoon workshops. This year Susan Bayliss took a group on 'Divine Wisdom in Music, an exploration of the esoteric teachings on music and sound. Veda took a group on Angelic healing and Tim Wyatt on 'Speaking Your Mind', providing tips on how to build confidence when addressing an audience.

This year Kim Dieu, the President of the European Federation of Theosophy, gave the renowned Blavatsky Lecture on 'The Wisdom of All Ages'. I had the pleasure of meeting her several times later in the week. Each morning, following breakfast, I attended a 10 minute meditation session prior to the morning's lecture. On Monday Ted Capstick gave a talk on 'Magic and Order in the Aquarian Age'. On Tuesday Colin Price looked at 'Concepts of God', from biblical and Theosophical perspectives. Wednesday Michael Van Buren gave us a lecture on 'Daring to Touch the Flame of Wisdom and on Thursday Gary Kidgell had us spell bound with his talk on 'Maya – The Veil of the Goddess'. On the final day, Friday, Jenny Baker gave us a lecture on 'The Crest Jewel Wisdom' linking the teachings of Shri Shamkaracharya with those of Theosophy and the Divine Wisdom.

For the rest of the week I fell into my allotted study groups and workshops where my intellect was regularly stimulated. I promised Mike Hall that I would participate in one of his Chi Kung sessions on Friday afternoon and I was very pleased I did, what an energising experience.

Throughout the week I met quite a lot of old friends and made new ones who helped me to make my stay a perfect week. I can thoroughly recommend a week or even a shorter stay if circumstances do not allow a full stay at Summer School, the very nature of the event transports you into another dimension. Over the week the heart centre opens wide to reflect the intuitive side of your inner nature and the intellect is transported far beyond its habitual comfort zone. My sincere gratitude to all who enabled and supported the event, it couldn't have happened without you. *(JM Durham)*.