

## Summer School History page – 2006

It is said that if you have enjoyed something or somewhere in the past, you should never revisit it for you are bound to be disappointed. I used to be a regular attendee at Summer School in the dim and distant past at Brecon & Atlantic College. I learned huge amounts about drama and acting and had fantastic fun. After a bit of a lay off, other than a brief sojourn two years ago, I decided to go to this year's course in Lampeter.

Was it as good as I remember?... You betcha!

OK, so the rooms are not the Hilton, but there is an en-suite option. The beds are designed for full length adults and the mattresses aren't wrapped in a plastic bag (those who remember Brecon will smile – or wince, whichever!). As for the Lampeter food... (remember Steve – try to be positive), let us say, you are unlikely to put on weight (see, there can be a positive side!).

As for the course: brilliant, as ever!

This year's tutors Janys Chambers and Kevin Dyer are working Actors/Writers/Directors and brought an up to date freshness to proceedings. Faced with a large group (34) they managed to juggle getting everyone to work together whilst breaking into smaller groups at times in order to give everyone a chance to present their work and to benefit from the guidance and expertise Janys and Kevin brought. Owing to limited work spaces available in the university Gary and Aled had to utilise a hall a short walk from the campus. This caused some problems for some people with mobility problems, but needs must, as they say. This meant that there were some problems with people unsure about which workspace they were working in for the next session and the necessary organic nature of the course, not being too rigidly timetabled, caused problems to some attendees but generally we all adapted very well.

Did it achieve its aims? Yes, wholeheartedly so! We learnt new techniques and confidence to explore deeper into our use of "truth" – not "acting". The "sharing" at the end of the week, where we all presented some of the things we had been working on and watched our fellow students was, to coin an oft over used modern phrase, "awesome". It was a privilege to see so many talented and committed people and to see how some had grown in confidence since the beginning of the week.

Why should you go if you haven't been before? It is a week of positive, supportive energy, a terrific learning experience, enormous fun, and addictive. The bonding that occurs naturally during the week is intense and the emotional farewells are like trying to separate super glue.

Should you go? NO! (Because if you all do, there might not be room for me to go again!) **Steve Vernon**

What an extraordinary experience! Having never performed in a theatre before, I did fear that I would be totally out of my depth and slightly intimidated by the course, but instead I was made to feel very welcome by all.

It was unusual to feel detached from the real world (but not a bad thing!) being pretty much confined to campus. The entire week was a unique experience, totally new to me and the emotional effect of the week, culminating the final day was not what I had anticipated. It was as though I was leaving my new family. I did reflect that perhaps I had been a guinea pig in the DAW thespianic 'Big Brother' house.

The course tutors Janys and Kevin were marvellous. They were professional, passionate and totally dedicated. Each day was intensive and packed full of various activities. The majority of which was a revelation to me, the group exercises especially. Unable to hide when it was 'my turn' any initial fears of

embarrassment due to my relative inexperience were quickly dissolved, as on each occasion I was rewarded with insightful advice and support. Not only did Kevin and Janys deliver expert tuition, their ability to draw out hidden talents from each of us meant that the week balanced both individual and group development.

The organisers, Aled and Gary (or is it Gareth?!) worked very hard in planning the night time activities, allowing the students to relax and interact, all of us having been fed and watered at the college refectory, I know now the diversity of recipes that can be adapted to include rice!

The week's social activities, ranging from quizzes and games through to our being unleashed on an unsuspecting Lampeter for a treasure hunt, culminated in a fancy dress extravaganza; top marks for Kevin and Janys in throwing modesty to the wind and getting those swimming cozzies out! Our final exercise, in which we presented our item of personal significance brought from home, was perhaps the most profound for me. I will definitely honour my pledge to join an amateur dramatics society, drive forward my acting ambitions and polish the skills that I learnt from tutors and colleagues alike whilst at Lampeter.

I would recommend the course to anyone with the acting bug, from untried novices to experienced players. **Wendy Ward**