

The Other Side of Glastonbury

Festivals needn't be an inaccessible pain for your student pocket – as [Rosie Shields](#) discovered when she Stewarded at this year's Glastonbury

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Many of us want to go to festivals over the summer, but if you're like me, the student loan just doesn't seem to stretch. How then can people our age afford to go, I hear you ask? Well, I think I have the answer- Oxfam Stewarding. The basic idea is you pay one deposit, just to make sure you actually make it to your shifts, and then you can choose as many festivals as you want to go to from their list. Easy. Okay, so you have to fork out a little, but you do get it all back once you've completed your summer of festivals, and you get loads of perks too.

First thing's first: you get five free meals; a life saver when it costs you a fiver just to get a portion of chips. On top of this you get free hot water on tap, perfect for a recuperative brew and super noodles. Oxfam also supply you with (mostly) hot showers and a secure place to camp for the whole event. For me, this is the best of both worlds, the festival experience with a few added luxuries. All you need is alcohol money.

I think some people get put off by the idea of working, but with only three eight hour shifts to complete and with all your earnings going to Oxfam it's not so bad. A mere 24 hours of your festival experience are spent working, and it's usually just checking tickets or wristbands- much better than cleaning loos. Not forgetting the array of people who come up to you just because you're wearing a bright orange tabard- it's a magnet for all sorts of people, and if nothing else I guarantee you'll have a laugh. The people who you work with are great too, it's lovely to meet people who enjoy festivals as much as you but want to give something back at the same time. I have to say, sharing stories about bands you've just seen and watching the sun rise in the morning doesn't feel like work.



There are real advantages in being first in the queue too. If you're stewarding you get to arrive a day or so before the public which means you miss the traffic, you're guaranteed a good speck for your tent, have shifts before the music begins and get to explore before everyone else. Glastonbury this year was absolutely amazing just because of the sheer scale of it! For a first timer, going with Oxfam meant that I didn't feel lost in spite of this. We had our own campsite and place of work, which scaled down the festival. As well as this, going with Oxfam actually meant I got a ticket- something which seems virtually impossible.

Glastonbury itself was incredible, and I'd recommend it wholeheartedly to everyone. And if you haven't thought about it before, I would recommend stewarding. I may have been working late Saturday evening, but my supervisor let us sneak to the Pyramid Stage to watch the Rolling Stones in our break. I even managed to explore Shangri-Hell on the Sunday evening (something which I can safely say I only really want to do once anyway...let's just say they spared no details on the theme). To be honest, work or no work, you're going to miss some things- it's impossible to experience everything in one visit. But hey, that's a great excuse to go back next year. Having helped contribute to the running of the festival, make millions for Oxfam and still party hard at Glastonbury I can safely say I'll be doing it all over again. Next stop, Reading!



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