

September Weekend

Surprisingly, for an autumn weekend, one of the best things mentioned by one member in their evaluation form was the weather. It was so sunny and warm that some open group sessions took place outside on the patio. It was also a weekend of change. Simon the new director of Shallowford House and his wife Alison have taken over the running of the place, including the bar. It seems that the previous DIY arrangements did not comply with the licensing laws. Drinks are now served before evening meals and then afterwards until 'last orders' 10 minutes before the bar closes at 11.00pm. Simon takes a warm, friendly, responsible approach to his role and pointed out that if we wanted an extension of opening times for the December weekend, he would happily apply for one.

Knowing that there would only be two trustees present, I took my road atlas suspecting that I would have to give directions over the phone for people who had got lost. Needless to say, the phone never stopped ringing. Unfortunately, my road atlas didn't show the names for roads around Shallowford. Added to that, I was unaware of the bridge closure next to Isaac Walton's Cottage, resulting in a major diversion from Stafford and the M6 via Eccleshall. Despite all this, plus a misleading sign on Station Road at Norton Bridge saying ROAD CLOSED AHEAD, everyone arrived in good time for the opening circle. This was led by our Treasurer with his inimical clarity of delivery and a fitting sense of dignity, which made a fitting start to the weekend.



The autumn weekend usually has the smallest in number of members, and this year was no exception, with a total of 15 attendees. However, there was a good mix of old and new members from remote Eastbourne to local Stoke-on-Trent, with an even spread across a wide age range, but with more men than women. The smaller numbers meant that people were more easily able to get to know each other and establish friendships that will hopefully continue into the future. A few people, including myself, took advantage of the fine weather to enjoy the beautiful rural landscape that surrounds Shallowford House. Another point of satisfaction expressed by members was the excellent quality of food presented by the new chef at each meal. At the closing circle, a new member felt that there was one person, not present, who ought to be

thanked for enabling individuals to enjoy such a wonderful experience. That person was Sir Elton John, because without his financial support, people with low or no incomes, would not have been able to attend.

A big round of thanks also should go to Les and Karl for organizing the raffle. We had some splendid prizes...and people were equally generous in buying tickets. We raised a total of £139, which will help directly to keep the charity functioning.

The work on the bridge is scheduled to end sometime in December. The chances are that they won't be completed before the December weekend, so if you are coming by car, please look out and follow the diversion signs. People taking a taxi should expect to pay around £17 because of the longer distance.

Keep well,

Maurice

Fundraising

September 2011 will see the end of the Elton John AIDS Foundation Award scheme, which has allowed us to offer free places with administrative support to many people who would otherwise have been unable to attend. The need to fundraise is clear.

We now have collecting tins, which can be obtained from Gary. The first lot have been snapped up, but a further supply has been ordered. If you would like to help raise funds by through this scheme, you can contact Gary by emailing: gary@nltsg.org.uk

At the AGM, the membership agreed to the establishment of a small group of not more than 4 people who would take the lead on fundraising for NLTSG. It is hoped that the group would be concerned with raising funds at all levels. We have secured an initial grant of £3,000 to establish a contact with a fundraiser. If you would like to join the group, or have any ideas, please contact me at thommatthews@sky.com

CLUB TWO8SIX at 286 Lewisham High Rd, London, SE13 6JZ, tel 0208 690 7761 are hosting a fund raiser for the NLTSG on Wednesday 1.12.10 - International AIDS Day 2010 from 8pm onwards, heading the cabaret bill will be 'Topping & Butch', there will be a raffle and range of fundraising entertainment activities,

DATES FOR 2010 - 2011

2010

17 - 19 December

2011

25 - 27 March

8 - 10 July

23 - 25 September

16 - 18 December