

As December is always a very popular *Living Proof* weekend, it was not surprising to find that once again we had a full house. Thankfully mealtimes weren't as chaotic as July when we had to have an overspill table in the lounge to cope with the numbers. Instead, everyone was able to be seated in the main dining room. At the most enjoyable Christmas Dinner the places were pre-allocate, which seemed to work, or maybe our table was just fortunate to have landed an outgoing, fun bunch of people. It was hilarious, we laughed so much we nearly wet ourselves.



What a joy to have fine sunny weather in December...even if the temperatures were a bit on the low side. It meant that members could explore the meadow with its pools that are now becoming clearer and see what was happening in our section of the gardens. The old hedge of mainly privet but with other shrubs mixed in had become overgrown and difficult to maintain. It has been replaced with a double row hornbeam hedge which should make a great improvement once it has chance to settle. Richard approved the severe pruning of the rose bushes in November and has trimmed

the cherry tree so that it should grow into a pleasing shape.

There was a helpful mix of established member to five new members...so, hopefully, everyone felt part of the family by the end of the weekend. Jenny Reid ran the closed group, Peter Jones facilitated the open group and our therapists were Simone, Josie, Lynne and George.

Raffle & Auction

Karl and his winsome assistant Shaun deserve to be praised for doing such an excellent job with the raffle: we raised £243, which was increased by a further £14 from 'guess the weight of the Christmas cake', kindly baked and donated by Paul. The closest guess came from Lynn. Thanks to everyone for donating such an amazing array of prizes...and of course to everyone who bought tickets.

The Make A Difference Trust

Some time ago we were awarded a grant by The Make A Difference Trust (MAD). Due to unforeseen problems we did not receive the third and final payment as planned. The good news is that we have just received the last payment; £2000 of the £5000 grant is specifically for those with links to the entertainment industry, with the remaining £3000 to support everyone else to get to the weekends. This means that we are again able to offer a limited number of fully funded places to people who currently or previously have a link to the theatre or entertainments, professional or amateur. This money will make a huge difference to us, and NLTSG is extremely appreciative of the support we have received from The MAD Trust.

Dove Trust

The longer standing members of the group might remember that we used to use The Dove Trust to collect charitable donations to the group and claim any gift-aid on our behalf. About 5 years ago we ran into problems with them and could not get in touch. After many attempts, including complaints to the charity commission, the board reluctantly accepted that we had to give up and write off any money that they owed us.

Fast forward a few years and we heard that The Dove Trust had folded and administrators were winding up their affairs. We had to send our bank details and, as usually happens in these cases, we thought that we might get a small pay out when they divided up the assets.

Most recently in December 2014, we have received a payment of £1200! Result!!

This, along with the money from MAD, is a very welcome cash injection at a time when our cash reserves are dwindling (each weekend we run takes over £2000 of our reserves). We now use Virgin money giving to collect donations and, fingers crossed, we have never had an issue with them. If you can spare anything for a one off donation or monthly direct debit, however small, please go to: www.nltsg.org.uk/donations

CIO

At the AGM 2014 the membership approved the board's recommendation to convert NLTSG from being an unincorporated charity to being a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). We have carried out our research, taken advice and are now in the process of submitting our new constitution to the Charity Commission for approval. We are planning to have the new organisation established by the 2015 March weekend and hold the first General Meeting

at that weekend. The AGM for the old organisation will be held in July as normal and at that time we will formally vote to dissolve the old charity. More details as we progress...

Ways of keeping in touch

- Send us a comment for inclusion in the newsletter.
- Follow us on Twitter
[https://twitter.com/](https://twitter.com/NLTSG) @NLTSG
- Visit our website: www.nltsg.org.uk
- Join our Yahoo group
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/nltsgmembers/>
- Like us on Facebook: 'National Long Term Survivors Group'.
www.facebook.com/pages/National-Long-Term-Survivors-Group/116095128459393

New Leaflet

We have just issued the latest NLTSG leaflet which includes dates for 2015-2017. The leaflet is being distributed to bars, clinics etc with the latest issue of Baseline magazine. A pdf version is also available.

Weekend Dates

Living Proof weekends 2015

March 27-29

July 10-12

Sept 25-27

Dec 11-13

Recently Diagnosed weekends 2015

May 29-31

November 6-8

Please tell your friends, clinics and support groups!