

After several consecutive **Living Proof** weekends with challenging weather conditions, finally we were blessed with a weekend of glorious sunshine. Each weekend is unique, but I suspect this one will go down for the surprising number of 'firsts'.

## Record Numbers!

This is the first time the number of members has exceeded 30 since the Elton John AIDS Foundation scheme finished. There was a wide age range of male and female members from all parts of the country from widely different social backgrounds, which produced a vibrant mix of 31 including 5 new members. The fine weather drew people outside on to the terrace and up into the meadow, which now has 7 ponds. One of them is home to a protected species of crested newt; but after they have hibernated it is hoped that they will venture into the other ponds too.



Another new feature which was in place by the time of the Newly Diagnosed weekend in May, is a fish pond with a shoal of stunningly bright coloured carp; relaxing to watch, and tame enough to nibble your

fingertips. Early risers would also have spotted rabbits and pheasants in the meadow.

## Annual General Meeting

This year we had the largest attendance ever. Nonetheless, the business of the meeting was dealt with in an efficient and timely manner. There were no resolutions and Andy, Isaac and Maurice were re-elected. After the AGM, the officers were elected to the same positions of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer as before.

## Memorial Garden

Spring daffodils that made such a splendid show in May were replaced by Irises in full bloom. These bulbs planted around the NLTSG cherry tree created a breath-takingly magical scene as you stepped through the arch in the surrounding garden hedge. On Saturday afternoon, Simon, the director of Shallowford House came back from the Garden Centre with an amazing collection of plants. We had mentioned that we would like the garden to have something in bloom throughout the year and as a start, suggested a few rose bushes with a budget of £100. Simon must be on very good terms with the Nursery because he returned with far more shrubs than expected. Not sure whether the planting would be done by Shallowford or us, I put the question to Simon who said that ideally it would make sense for us who take complete charge.

What a challenge!

By calling on those members with known gardening credentials or interest, a team of willing volunteers was assembled as if by magic. The prepared plot wasn't big enough

and had to be enlarged, so that the job of putting the rose bushes, dahlias and other plants into the ground took considerable time and effort. Thanks to Richard, Steve, Bob, Alyn, Anthony, Tony and others who laboured under a sweltering sun a truly superb result was achieved. We are also indebted to a member living locally who has kindly offered to keep an eye on our garden between weekends.

## Raffle

Thanks to the industry of Karl and Joshua and the generosity of members, the raffle raised a record £315: Well done everyone for bringing such wonderful prizes and buying so many tickets. This was held outside on the terrace – another ‘first’!

Apart from the customary attendance of musical and theatrical members, this weekend had a record number of artists working in the fields of pastels, watercolours, oils and ceramics.

The wonderful weather allowed us to have a most enjoyable barbeque on the lawn for the very first time at a *Living Proof weekend*.

Keep well,

Maurice

## Newly Diagnosed Weekends

Following the success of our first Newly Diagnosed weekend in November 2012, our second one in May this year resulted in another triumph – on the estimation of those who took part. The next one will be in November. Please bring these weekends to the attention of any individuals, groups or organisations that you think might be interested or benefit from them.

The weekends are run by NLTSG members for people newly diagnosed with HIV. The aim of the weekends is to help newly

diagnosed people overcome the fears and lack of knowledge at the time of diagnosis leaving them with a more positive outlook, increased knowledge about HIV and the basis of a support network.

Please contact: 07763 753444 or email: [ndbookings@nltsg.org.uk](mailto:ndbookings@nltsg.org.uk)

## Fund Raising

All donations can now be Gift Aided. Gary has produced a visiting card to give to your family and friends. For further details contact [Gary@nltsg.org.uk](mailto:Gary@nltsg.org.uk)

£3 a month is all it takes to help us support people who have been living with HIV for 5 or more years

[www.nltsg.org.uk/donations.htm](http://www.nltsg.org.uk/donations.htm)



## Weekend Dates

### 2013

Sept 27 - 29

Dec 13 – 15

### 2014

March 28 – 30

July 1 - 13

Sept 26 – 28

Dec 12 - 14