

Despite a weather forecast of competing high and low pressure systems, the September *Living Proof* weekend was blessed with glorious sunshine. The gardens were in full bloom including our own dedicated section, and the developments in the meadow with wooden decking and grass labyrinth were well worth visiting. The autumn weekend is often the quietest; last year's 20th Anniversary was an exception, but this year followed the traditional trend.

Nice Balance

With six new members and twelve existing members, there was a healthy balance of knowledge and experience to pass on to new 'family members', whose fears and anxieties seemed to have been swiftly overcome by the time they merged with their peers in the Opening Circle. One couldn't have wished for a more diverse range of ages and backgrounds coming from distant and local regions of the country.



Positive feedback from both facilitated groups, run by Emma and Peter, indicated what a vital role these play. Similarly appreciative comments were made about the therapies, which were supplied by Theresa, Josie and Simone. The food at

Shallowford House also received high praise: the trialled self-service cooked breakfast system would appear to have been a success as there was no long queue. Perhaps more important from a social aspect, everyone was able to sit down together to eat at more or less the same time.

The fine weather meant that some people chose to congregate outdoors, so there was a considerable amount of informal peer support taking place outside of the facilitated sessions. This included not only verbal communication, but also non-verbal communication through the language of music.

Musical Talent

It was a great personal joy to be able to play duets with our highly talented new member Steven. As a token of his appreciation at the warmth with which he was welcomed by the group, Steven gave a short concert on Saturday night in the Chapel. His accomplished playing of pieces by Rachmaninoff and Debussy, received rapturous applause from an appreciative and supportive audience. If he plays like this in his forthcoming Grade 8 exam, he will pass with distinction.

Raffle

Thanks to Karl and Mark supported by the generosity of members, the raffle raised £170. Well done everyone for donating prizes and buying tickets. Thanks also to all those who helped to make such a memorable *Living Proof* weekend.

Maurice

Memorial Garden

The newly created bed with rose, dahlias, lobelias, fuchsias and lavender plants already looked well established. It seems to require little maintenance, taking only a short time to weed. Perhaps we should now be thinking about the next stage of its development. From the comments made this weekend, the space has a great significance for members, and seems capable of invoking strong emotions. This would appear to vindicate the resources and efforts put into its creation and development.



1992 Fund

One year on from its establishment the 1992 Fund has enabled 11 individuals to attend Living Proof and joint weekends with Baseline who otherwise would have been unable to attend. This number does not include the September weekend.

Newly Diagnosed Weekends

We have now successfully run two weekends for people recently diagnosed with HIV. We have not set a firm definition of 'recently'. Anyone feeling that they are still coming to terms with their diagnosis is likely to find the weekends beneficial. The next one is 8 – 10 November. Please bring this to the attention of individuals or groups that might be interested.

Fund Raising

Regular and one off donations have gradually increased over the past year. This

is a healthy sign for the future continuation of NLTSG. We are grateful for the support of Make a Difference Fund and other funders, which has enabled us to sustain and develop our support and activities. However funding awards are for limited period, whilst regular donations from members offer us a sustainable source of income.

£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

World AIDS Day 2013

NLTSG will be joining forces with ABplus in Birmingham to celebrate World AIDS Day on Sunday 1st December 2013. The WAD event commences at 1.00pm at ABplus Centre for workshops under the title of: PUTTING THE ANGRY "A" BACK INTO AWARENESS! This is followed by afternoon tea hosted by Barbara Nice with musical accompaniment from members of The Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra, before leaving a 6.15pm for a special World AIDS service at Birmingham Cathedral. NLTSG members attending the event may claim travel expenses if they so wish. Please let us know if you intend to come.

ABplus 29/30 Lower Essex Street B5 6SN

Weekend Dates

2013

Dec 13 – 15

2014

March 28 – 30

July 1 - 13

Sept 26 – 28

Dec 12 - 14