

Wine & Wisdom 2008 – White Lodge Centre Cheque Presentation

Following the successful Wine & Wisdom Quiz evening last November, Branch Chairman Alison Coffey recently carried out her last duty before leaving office to make the presentation of a cheque for £1,000-00 to the Fund Raising staff at The White Lodge Centre, Chertsey.

Accompanied by Tony Suter and Gerald Cole the donation was handed over to Catherine Thurston the Centre's Fund Raiser and Public Relations Officer (pictured right) who expressed the appreciation of everyone from the Centre who receive help coping with the affects of Cerebral Palsy.

After this pleasant ceremony, Catherine was joined by her colleague, Jenny Steptoe when we were given a guided tour of the Centre's facilities which have been vastly developed over the 45 years since it was opened under the name of the White Lodge Spastics Centre.

Then it was simply one building but now boasts three modern buildings, of which they are justifiably proud. The Children's Centre, though quiet on our visit due to the Easter Holidays, is usually reverberating to the sound of children enjoying the wide ranging facilities that are offered. The major attractions are the Hydrotherapy Pool and a state of the art Sensory Room where children who have lost one of their senses due to Cerebral Palsy can enhance the remaining senses. Activity rooms abound and the emphasis is on enjoyment and learning.

Another facility is *Treetops*, a modern building that provides respite care in a secure environment. Able to accommodate up to 12 children for varying periods, they are cared for on a 24 hour basis by highly skilled and dedicated carers. Despite his disability, we were privileged to see one young man bouncing along the corridor on an inflated ball at an amazing speed, without using his hands!

The final port of call was *The Rendezvous*, which was opened last year at a cost of just over £1 ½ million that provides adults and their carers with a wide range of activities all to enable development and making the most of life. Equipped with an art studio, modern gymnasium and computer training suite *The Rendezvous* is unique in the support it provides.

The tour was completed with coffee and biscuits in the *Cafe Bradbury* which both provides refreshments generally but also doubles as a training facility, complete with adjustable height preparation tables and cooking facilities for wheelchair occupants.

Catherine and Jenny explained that there are more plans for development which is driven by the wish to provide facilities that the 'clients' want rather than what is thought best for them. This was perhaps the most prominent aspect which is symbolic of the success and achievements over nearly half a century of service.

It costs £1,000 a day to keep the Centre operating and though some state funding is provided, Catherine and Jenny are always seeking out funding so that the good work of the Centre can continue.

This was an inspiring visit and made possible by the tremendous generosity of the people who took part in the Wine & Wisdom 2008 Fund Raising Evening. Thank you! Catherine and Jenny will welcome any member who wishes to visit White Lodge; just an advance 'phone call is all that is required. Members may also find out more about White Lodge by visiting www.whitelodgecentre.co.uk.

