

Special Feature

Just an Ordinary Afternoon in the Wychwoods...

Well, not exactly. A family gathering had been planned. Eldest and offspring were coming from afar, and as is usual in our family, the rest were converging to catch up on his news and to get together. Where could accommodate 18 of us for lunch? A friend recommended the Wychwood Golf Club, so my husband and I went down to check and enquire. The staff, welcoming and willing to cope with such a group of mixed ages and requirements, readily agreed. So far so good.

Are You Alright?

The day arrived, with the younger contingent hiking across the fields, and the rest arriving by car. Perhaps we had slightly under-estimated the distance and time it would take to walk. At length the earlier arrivals, enticed by the wonderful array of food, began to serve themselves from the carvery. The food was amazing. Minutes later I noticed that my husband (sitting right beside me) seemed to be in some difficulty, very quiet and with his head down. "Are you all right?" I asked him. "Well no, not really," he replied.

Classic understatement. Realising the case was urgent. I signalled to a son sitting nearby, who was very quick to respond. No one had expected the full-blown drama which followed. Bob was choking. His airways were blocked and he had stopped breathing. The colour drained from his face, as seconds ticked away.

Then from within the dining room members of the public came forward to help. A nurse, a retired officer of the St John Ambulance Brigade, another nurse, a Police Officer, (and there may well have been others), all used every skill they had

to save his life. The restaurant emptied, an ambulance was sent for, and telephone instructions from the approaching paramedic team were followed. A special manoeuvre was performed by the St John practitioner which eventually cleared the airways slightly, but consciousness was not regained. CPR and the 'kiss of life' were given. Finally the ambulance arrived and further assistance helped the patient begin to regain consciousness. A second ambulance took Bob and myself to the JR, where he underwent tests and observation.

Weren't they Marvellous?

I need to thank the staff of the Wychwood Golf Club. They were amazing in their patience, understanding and control of the situation. Not only did they deal calmly with the matter there and then, closing the restaurant and summoning the ambulance, I believe they afterwards provided chips in the bar to the children who arrived late (fortuitously as it happens, for they were spared the worst of the drama). They refused to take any payment for the occasion, and even telephoned the next morning to ask how the patient had fared.

I can't thank these wonderful people enough. I shall in the next few days acquire the names and addresses of the life-savers from one of our party who I believe noted them down, and thank them individually. But for the moment I am just thankful that things turned out as they did. The first paramedic told me that it had been a very close thing; touch and go really.

Just an ordinary Sunday afternoon in the Wychwoods...

Beryl Hutton