Scandinavian Politics and Culture
WHall November 2013
Evaluation

Almost all of the 40 resident participants wrote evaluation comments on the weekend.

Value of this experience for the education and learning process

As in earlier recent residential the overwhelming response was positive - along with 'Superb' and 'Absolutely brilliant' and many 'excellent's, comments were added to help explain why this experience is valued so highly.
For example: 'The real value of these occasions is in the discussion groups... sometimes I start to think "all this talk, what about some action?" - But thought is action. One of the group said "we don't necessarily find answers – WE LIVE THE QUESTIONS - and I liked that...'; Several others focused on the importance of the discussion-led sessions: '...as usual the discussions, both 'formal' in sessions and at coffee breaks and over meals... these are as beneficial as any formal presentation'.

The programme balance and format is working well, with two special Lectures during the weekend adding to and stimulating the discussion group themes. 'The Lecture by Lesley Riddoch (Friday evening) was worth the journey in itself...' and others gave the highest praise to this Lecture session. Both Lectures were high-lighted: 'Excellent speakers' and another felt that the Saturday (RW Society) Lecturer was 'very professional', but several thought that Jim McGuigan's delivery was hampered because he delivered the lecture sitting down.
The following comment can move us on: 'I cannot recommend this experience enough! What a pity more of the younger generation have not had this valuable learning experience (with us)...';

Advance preparation

Several admitted to no preparatory work at all. Most read notes, related articles and followed references, and a number did some significant reading (books even) and viewed *Borgen*...

Comment on the venue & the value of the residential experience

Wortley Hall again praised generously: 'lovely' 'very pleasant' 'excellent food and helpful staff' 'What a find...' 'really beautiful venue... full marks to catering staff...' 'a little difficult to find, otherwise excellent'. 'There were technical problems with power-point that need to be addressed.' This summarises the view of most: 'These residential occasions are absolutely vital. They should be preserved at all costs'. Leading to...

Comments on fees and subsidy issues

This captures the essence of comments and arguments made: 'Subsidized fees very welcome - essential to encourage the right blend of participants...'.
This point was made: Those who can afford higher 'market rates' can make donations to help keep fees low. 'Don't put up fees'! Actually, the booking fee this time had been increased above inflation and most approve this - which does lower the subsidy required.

The Future...

The main message: 'more of the same or similar'.