



THE SAM FUND TOP HATS & TIARAS GALA EVENING 2020



Oh what a night! On Saturday, 22nd February 2020 we partied the night away at The Annual **SAM Fund** Black Tie Gala Evening held once again at the Mercure Hotel, Brands Hatch, Kent. We welcomed some new faces and we were pleased to welcome back some familiar ones.

Everyone looked fabulous. The theme this year was Top Hats and Tiaras and a great effort was made. There were plenty of dapper gents to be seen and a plethora of lovely ladies looking majestic! They were all ready for a night of fun, food, drinks and dancing.

To start the evening, drinks were served in the foyer encouraging everyone to chat to old friends and new. Lapel florals were being sold to raise money, £5 notes were being exchanged for tickets for the special raffle with the chance of winning a fantastic first prize of a one week holiday in a Spanish Villa or second prize of a relaxing Spa Day at the Mercure Hotel.

Then we were called into the banqueting hall by Steve Ashby our resident MC who not only generously donated his fee but also donated a further £100 to **The SAM Fund!** Wow! Steve who was accompanied by his lovely wife Ann did a fantastic job as usual. *Thank you Steve!*

Everyone found their tables that were decorated with balloons (that represented **The SAM Fund** logo), beautiful fresh flowers and the menus superbly designed and made by Lauren, a trustee and Sam's sister. *Thank you Lauren!*

Before the meal and to start the fun, we had a game of Heads and Tails. Everyone stood up and Steve N. explained the game advising the last one standing would be the winner. Lauren expertly demonstrated how to play. There was some great cheering and banter going on, and everybody joined in the fun. The eventual winner was Taylan (Table 1) winning £60. Taylan aged 6 is officially our youngest fan. *Well done!*

We all sat down for the meal and had a lovely goats cheese tart to start, a main of Roast Beef, a dessert of crumble and custard, cheese and biscuits, coffee and mints. Scrumptious!

Our chairman Steve Nottage addressed the audience thanking everyone for attending such a lavish occasion and for their continuing support for **The SAM Fund**. He went on to advise what a difference it makes to the children and their families to spend some time together and away from procedures and hospitals. He said that the families enjoyed their time away and appreciated that money was being raised for them. Steve celebrated the fact that **The SAM Fund** had sent 114 families on holiday and had raised nearly **£600,000** since the charity was formed and thanked everyone for making this possible.

He then advised that the trustees had been discussing who should win a prize for the best Top Hat and Tiara. Jason (Table 2) and John (Table 11) and Barbara (Table 11) and Samantha (Table 13) were in the clapometer final to decide the winners. John took the prize of red wine for the best top hat and the ladies, Barbara and Samantha shared the prize (champagne) for the best tiara.

Next was the prizes for the money box with the most money and another prize for the heaviest box. John and Barbara (Table 11) won the prize (chocs and red wine) for most money with the astonishing sum of **£770** –Yes I said **£770!** Wow! Lew and Jean (Table 10) won the prize (biscuits and beers) for the heaviest box weighing 4lb 3oz.

Steve then reported that we had sent seven families on holiday this year with five families that couldn't travel for various reasons. He said those families remain on our books and we will hopefully send them on holiday this year (their circumstances permitting).

Steve was then presented with some big cheques. There was a cheque for **£1,009.97** from *The Loyal Flower of Kent Lodge*, another for **£1,159** from *Martial Art World* and another for **£300** from *The Griffin Public House*. The donations just keep rolling in! The 'Thank You's' were next, coming thick and fast. There are so many that make this a special night. Thanks to Steve Ashby our MC, our singer Claire who donated a large part of her fee back to **The SAM Fund**, the hotel team and the trustees for their

amazing hard work. But mainly you – the people. Without your generosity we cannot do our work.

Now for the evening entertainment. This year we had a fantastic new young singer called Claire who sung some great dance songs adding to the party atmosphere. She had great fun with us and joined in. Everybody was on the floor dancing, singing and cutting some serious shapes.

The draw for the general raffle prizes got everyone excited to win a prize or two from the prize table. There were numerous, wonderful prizes donated and we really do thank you.

Then the £5 Special Draw for the Spanish Villa was announced and was won by Tracy and Rob (Table 14) which was greeted by whoops and clapping from their table. An auction followed with five super items that raised even more needed funds

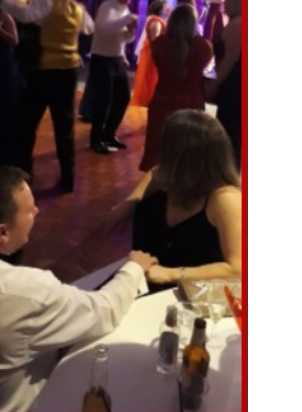
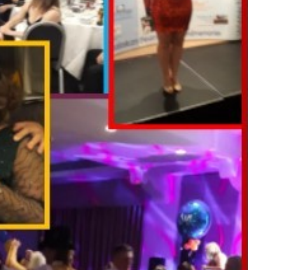
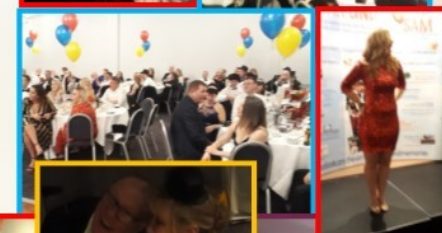
The Green Screen Selfie Heart was a great success which created great fun as people put on hats and glasses for different looks for the camera with some hilarious results!

The money raised on that evening was in excess of an amazing **£8,000! WOW!!** Thanks everyone. You did us proud! We can now send even more families on a **Smiles And Memories** holiday.

We hope that everyone enjoyed themselves and will come again next year. . . why not bring your friends, then they can become ours.

We love you all. Xx ♥

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