

Friendship Link & Action Group



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NEWSLETTER 3

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FLAG AGM

Would you believe it, FLAG will soon be celebrating its first birthday?!

This of course means that our AGM (Annual General Meeting) is approaching.

We sincerely hope that you will be able to attend, where we will report on the successes; finances; and activities of the past year and plans for the FLAG's future.

The AGM will be held in the Lifestyle Choices Project office on Thursday 29th March, between 2pm to 4pm.

If you require transport support, please contact the office on 01234 838884.



FLAG Cash

Our trusty treasurer, Scott, visited the John Grooms Funding Team to work on an application for FLAG funding. We hope to successfully secure up to £10,000 for the next two years, so fingers crossed.

In the event that we get knocked back, we will endeavour to target other funding sources.

Forthcoming Events

We will shortly be sitting down and planning an exciting diary of events for the spring and summer. Remember that we would be grateful for your ideas.

In the mean time we have a fun event arranged, which is a Murder Mystery Night on 28th April.



A local theatre group (The Totternhoe Players) will perform a short play, which results in the death of one of the characters.

After a food and drink break, the audience then has the opportunity to ask the cast questions, before deciding upon who done it, how, and why before the murder scene is acted out!

It's a great social evening. So if there is any budding Colombos interested in a top night out, please call 01234 838884, to register your interest.

Please note that our Cadbury's World tour has been re-scheduled to later in the year.

Previous Events

We have been busy packing in five events since November. In chronological order these were:-

- Seasonal Meal
- BBC Tour (2nd visit)
- Fish & Chip Supper
- Cinema & Meal Experience
- Whittlebury Health Spa day

Seasonal Meal

Thirty-three FLAG members pulled crackers, donned paper hats and enjoyed a three-course Christmas meal at The Beefeater, Priory Marina. It was a great night with good food, good wine and good company. The venue was very disabled friendly with table service.

The restaurant was dressed with Christmas decorations and each table was candle lit and had a free bottle of wine. Unfortunately on one table the decoration came



in contact with the candle. Luckily Ros was on hand to douse the flames with their free bottle of wine!

Fish n' Chips supper

A huge turn out of FLAG members supported our first event of 2007. This was a fish n' chip supper in the Centenary Hall, Kempston. The fully

licensed venue was ideal and the fish and chips very tasty.

The star of the evening was Janice Calderley, our very own karaoke queen. She did a great job both singing and encouraging members to take the microphone.



Fortunately, for some of us, the audience were very tolerant and didn't throw buns and kindly applauded.

BBC Tour (revisited)

Such was the demand for the original BBC tour that we returned to the BBC Television Centre in January. A group of seventeen FLAG members enjoyed the tour and spotted several celebrities including Phil Jupitus from Never Mind The Buzzcocks and 6 o'clock newsreader, Natasha Kaplinsky.



Cinema & Meal Experience

by John Rowlands

The Great Xscape - no prison of war camp, no barbed wire fence and no Steve McQueen on his motorbike. This time it was a more exciting adventure.

Once again with the hard work of the LPC team, and with (I love Robbie) Tracey directing her team of dedicated

volunteers along with the assistance of Nick (I love Ipswich), the FLAG team have again achieved its objective to provide an opportunity for the members to escape their daily lifestyles, and experience the joys of the MK Xscape leisure and cinema complex. There was a wide selection of films on offer, and the chance of trying various restaurants, such as Nandos, Frankie and Benny's and many more.

Given the vocal response afterwards, I think all expectations were met with regards to the venue and entertainment. But the best part of the day for me was the meeting up again with old and new friends who form our special group. A group in which everyone is made to feel comfortable with friendly chatter about daily topics, and, if needed, offer of support to other team members. That's why the members of FLAG are special, they all have skills and experiences to share. Looking forward to the next gathering.

Gardening Tips

by the Great Thor (aka FLAG member Andrew Eriksson)

Planting out Potted Spring Plants

- 1) Always prepare the ground beforehand. Dig it over with plenty of manure and leave to rest. This can be done anytime from Autumn to Spring, but I recommend Autumn as the winter effect will help work the soil through.
- 2) Before planting, break the soil down with a small fork or rake to remove any unwanted growth or big stones (save the stones, by the

way, for other uses – to be explained in the next issue!)

- 3) Before planting out, arrange your potted plants on the soil bed, to see how they will look when blooming. This enables you to plan for colour, height, and foliage.
- 4) Gently tap out the plant and rootball from the pot, taking care not to damage any spreading roots. Use the pot as a measure of the size of the hole in the soil. You can then easily transfer the young plant. Press in with a little compost or peat then cover with the soil.
- 5) Make sure that the soil is damp, to establish the plants. Don't drown them, as this will destabilize them.

When you water your young plants, treat them to a little feed at the same time. Enjoy them as they flourish! But a word of caution: watering in summer is essential, but make sure you do this in the early morning or late evening. Do not water in the heat of the day as this will scorch the plants – and isn't great for you either!

Disability Yes, Inability No

John Baker would like to encourage FLAG members to come forward with their goals and achievements, for us all to share.

Your determination to succeed would be an example to us all.

So don't be modest and please come forward, so we can include an article about you in a future Newsletter.

Recipe for minestrone soup and mini meatballs (serves 4)

by Jenny Vaccaro

For soup:

- 1 Bunch of celery
- 3 Leeks
- 2 Onions
- 2 Carrots
- 1 Savoy cabbage
- 2 Courgettes
- 3 Cloves of garlic (optional)
- 1 Can of chopped tomatoes
- 2 Dessertspoons of olive oil
- Salt

Pepper

For meatballs:

- 1lb fresh mince
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 Dessertspoons breadcrumbs

Method:

1. Fry chopped onion, garlic in olive oil.
2. Chop 1" pieces of celery, leeks, courgettes, carrots and fry with onions and garlic.
3. Slice cabbage into strips and add to the rest of the veg and fry for 2 mins or until coated in oil.
4. Add can of tomatoes plus 1 can of cold water so that all veg is covered.
5. Bring to the boil and then lower heat and simmer until veg is

cooked. Season with salt and pepper.

6. Put mince, 1 egg yolk and breadcrumbs in a mixing bowl.
7. Mix together with a spoon or hands thoroughly and pat mixture into small round balls about the size of large marbles.
8. Bring a deep pan of water to the boil.
9. Gently drop or lower on a spoon each separate meatball into the water.
10. When cooked they will rise to the surface.
11. Carefully remove them from the pan.
12. Check soup by tasting and season to your liking.
13. Return to higher setting and add meatballs gently but do not stir.
14. If you find you do not have enough liquid or have over boiled put in a squirt of tomato puree plus water to your requirement.
15. Bring to required heat and serve with a ladle.
16. Sprinkle with Parmesan and serve with a large chunk of fresh bread.

Buon Appetito.

Motor Sport

by John Baker

Hi, my name is John Baker and I am a member of the FLAG committee. In the future I hope to help anyone who is interested in experiencing the

excitement of taking part, watching motor sport or going to events.

Rest assured that we are not suggesting test drives of jet engine cars, like Top Gear presenter Richard Hammond, but if you are interested in a professional ride in an American Ascar with speeds of 200mph around Rockingham or a ride in a disabled friendly rally car, please contact the LCP office.

Whittlebury Health Spa by Bev Whittigton

I thought why not, when I heard that FLAG had planned a day of pampering at a health spa. It was something I always wanted to do, but never had the opportunity.

On entering Whittlebury Hall reception area at 9.30 am, I was impressed by the sheer magnificence of the up-market building. I felt I was on the set for an episode of Dallas.

We had a conducted tour of the facilities and were given magnet bracelets to gain access to the plush changing rooms. Everyone was issued with a white dressing gown and white slippers. When we were all together we resembled a Roman toga party.

Firstly I went to the main spa area, which consisted of a large spa pool in which you could sit to be bombarded with bubbles, plus four high jets of water that showered you with great force. Around this area were ten separate rooms, which one visited to refresh the body with different sensations, from hot saunas, crystal

rooms, salt rooms, an ice cave and every type of shower. One shower was a bucket full of ice water; I gave that one a miss!



After a very relaxing but tiring morning, it was time for lunch, so we

donned our white robes and headed for the dining room. There was hot and cold food of every description and the best buffet I have ever seen. I think we all went round at least three times. It was yummy.

After lunch we all did our own thing. I went into a large swimming area that was decorated with a Roman theme. There were lounge beds all round the pool and a large Jacuzzi in the corner.

In every room there were large bowls of fresh fruit to eat and flavoured ice drinks.

Resting rooms are supplied with beds and duvets. I tried this for a short time, but kept thinking of what I was missing so I got up and tried everything again.

At 5.00 pm it was time to hand back the bracelets, dressing gowns and slippers, and return to normality. I felt sad to leave the complex for home. However I felt GREAT and would love to go again. I slept very well that night.

Can I thank Jenny Vacarro for suggesting this day. I would recommend it to anyone.

Cheers.

Beauty Tips for Ladies

by Jenny Vaccaro

Ladies, look after your skin this winter! You need to take more care of your skin in winter, as fierce wind and cold air are very destructive to your skin and lips.

Always moisturise with a rich cream every morning before going out or putting on make up. Apply cream or Vaseline before lipstick.

This regime applies also to your hands, which show the signs of ageing, even if you wear gloves. However, unlike boobs and chins etc, they cannot be changed with surgery.

At night always cleanse with cleanser or a good old-fashioned flannel. This acts as an exfoliator to remove dead skin from your face ready to receive your night cream. Always apply night cream more generously than day cream as it has more time to absorb overnight.

Another overnight tip for hands is to acquire plastic gloves from the garage; coat both hands with olive oil; put on gloves and secure with either a ribbon or elastic band (not too tight); leave overnight and see and feel the difference in the morning!

Ladies, do not forget your crowning glory, your hair! This suffers badly from cold, damp and wind and is often overlooked. Apply conditioner generously and leave on as long as possible. If you have to go out in bad weather wear a warm hat – it will protect your hair and keep you warm.

Finally Gentlemen this applies to you too – look for your feminine side and please yourself and your loved ones. Most companies now do a range of skin care products for men at reasonable cost. Your skin needs looking after as much as a lady's.

Karaoke Queen

by Janice Calderley

I was in my twenties when I first sang at a Karaoke event. I was held at Milton Keynes Point. I was terrified at first, with a crowd of people looking at me, but from that moment on was hooked.



Since that first event I have sang in many places in the country; from Canterbury to Blackpool. I also sang in Tenerife, which was hard because nobody understood English.

I have also entered a drinking karaoke competition, which involved drinking beer and singing at the same time. I did really well, but these days I stick to water when I'm singing.

Singing has always been a passion of mine. It started when I was a child. I used to watch 'Top of the Pops' and thought the pop stars looked wonderful in their flash costumes.

In Karaoke you can become the pop star you always wanted to be and if you can't sing it's still a bit of fun. So the next time you see Karaoke in your local pub pluck up your courage and give it a try.