

## Friendship Link & Action Group



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### Previous Events

We have had two successful events to report since the publication of the previous newsletter.

We were delighted that both events were so well attended, which shows that the wide range of activities offered by the committee continue to be relevant to FLAG members.

### Quiz Night

The Quiz Night was held in the restaurant area of the White Horse bar and grill in Newnham Avenue, Bedford.

Thirty-six members split into teams of four per table. Your chances of winning were greatly enhanced if you could spot and sit on the same table as members whose brains are packed to overflowing with trivia. But the evening wasn't about winning a quiz, it was about having a night out with good company in a friendly atmosphere.

Questions were in music, sport, geography, history and general knowledge. Sitting on the winning table were Ros, Jenny, Lou and her friend. So next time we hold a quiz, you know whose table to sit on!

At the end of the evening we held a raffle with some great prizes, which were mostly donated by Vera Rust. Vera is one of our members who has worked tirelessly on fundraising for the FLAG.

### Christmas Party

The evening started early for our volunteers who travelled across the cold Bedfordshire countryside picking up far flung FLAG members along the way.



By 7pm a record number of forty-five FLAG members were seated in the Priory Marina Beefeater Restaurant. Crackers were pulled and paper hats donned before being served with a delicious three-course Christmas meal.

It was a terrific night with good food, good wine and good company. The venue was warm and cosy, dressed with Christmas decorations and each table was candle lit. The only thing missing was a sprig of mistletoe.



At the end of the evening, volunteer Bev Whittington made a speech to thank Nick Cochran, our hardworking FLAG Chairman and everyone raised a glass to toast the Bedford & Luton Community Foundation for making this memorable night possible.

### **Forthcoming Events**

We will send you a list of forthcoming events for 2008 soon, as the FLAG committee is working very hard on a variety of ideas to ensure you have some stimulating evenings and days to look forward to.



Rest assured that as soon as events and dates have been formalised, we will be contacting you, and hope you will be available to attend.

In the meantime, details of the next event (20<sup>th</sup> February) are enclosed with this newsletter.

### **John's Hill Climb**

Hello fellow FLAG members.

You may recall me from previous FLAG events and meetings. I am John Baker, FLAG Committee member and Motorsport enthusiast.

I am delighted to report that on 29<sup>th</sup> September, I was able to compete in my first competitive Motorsport event since my stroke in 2003.

It was a car hill climb event, held at Loton Park, near Shrewsbury. The hill climb consisted of a 1.75 mile timed drive through the wooded countryside, on a tarmac surface.



I was driving my trusty BMW 328i, which performed faultlessly. I had two practice runs, to get familiar with terrain and alleviate some of my nerves. Two timed runs then followed this. Each ascent was quicker, as my knowledge and confidence built.

What made the whole weekend so much easier (and less stressful) was the satellite navigation system that I used to guide me to and from the event, near to the North Wales borders. It was certainly worth purchasing, as it gave me much more confidence to attempt the 250 mile round trip.



It was a fantastic day and experience I'll never forget. In fact, I hope to participate in several similar events in 2008, hopefully in my BMW M3. I would be delighted if any FLAG members would like to come and cheer me on. For me, supporting one another is so important to moving forward and encouraging.

### **FLAG's Favourite Pub**

You may remember that on the back of your membership application forms we asked you to tick your preferred venues for social evening and the majority ticked 'pub/restaurant' option.



We opted for the White Horse in Newnham Avenue, Bedford for the following reasons:

1. It has wheelchair access and disabled facilities.
2. Relaxed and homely atmosphere in which to enjoy a drink or a meal.
3. Excellent service by staff who are regional winners of the Morning Advertiser's 'Best Bar Team Award'.
4. Holders of the Morning Advertiser's regional 'Best Managed House Award'.

5. Charles Wells 'Pub Of The Year Award'.
6. The manager, Nigel Anstead always does a 'good deal' and is happy to lay on entertainment.

Six good reasons to use the White Horse. If you know of any equally good pubs or restaurants, we would like to know.

### **Car booting**



Readers may remember that FLAG member Lesley Crossley made a huge effort this year to collect donations for fundraising. To date we have had an office table sale and two car boot sales.

The most recent of these was on a wet and windy Sunday in November. Ros Graham packed up her car with box loads from the office, to take up to the Bedford Rugby Ground for the sale. Clothes, toys, books, CDs, ornaments, glasses, and china – all had to be packed up, unpacked and set out.

There is a skill to carbooting that the uninitiated lack. Veterans on the circuit know exactly what to do and what to sell. They pitch up and in seconds the stuff is on display, they're sitting smugly in director's chairs under quality awnings, drinking hot coffee and reading the Sundays. We novices, on the other hand, are

wrestling with boxes and money bags, trying to put up trestle tables and clothes hanging rails, battling against a force seven sleet laden gale, while staving off the hordes of chancers who gather round like the Living Dead, who'd have your kidneys before you noticed AND barter the price down to 40p with your Boot Buddy.



The stalwart team on the day was Jenny Vacarro, Isaac Foster, Jenny's friend and Ros. After the first rush – which left us dazed and confused - *(no change there then – Ed.)* – the interest dwindled to a steady trickle and we started to shift the stock. Our enthusiasm for our goods on sale was matched by the punters' determination to get everything for nothing. The effect of this is that you feel the flush of triumph when you actually get that 50p in your hand.

It's heady stuff. Suddenly you're Alan Sugar. The 50ps build and build and a prospective empire starts to open out before you. You get into the Booter mindset; you know your market; you take risks; you teamwork. The smug couple under the awning next door are recreational lightweights – where is their passion, you ask, as you throw the bundle of plastic cutlery, the Woody from Toy

Story, the eggcups with rabbit ears, the bobbly fleece and the Kylie video into your last carrier bag in exchange for that fantastic fat shiny £2 coin!

Oh no – was that really the last carrier bag? The classic novice Booter error! The smug couple under the awning have branded eco-friendly bags in rows! And we've run out!

Hang on ... maybe, we've run out because we've sold loads. They've shifted one measly set of cork coasters. And our profit – once we've counted up all the coins – is upwards of 60 quid!

Time to pack up. All in all, a success, thanks to all the contributors. Only next time, plan for a blue-sky day and grab all the carrier bags from your cupboards.

## **For Sale**

### **Rolling Walker (Rollator)**



*(sample photo)*

- Brand new
- Light weight
- Simple to fold
- Shopping bag
- Solid tyres
- Adjustable height
- Easy to use brakes

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