

**FLAG**  
Bedford



Friendship Link & Action Group

## **Newsletter**

**Editor Jo Branson & Committee**

**Autumn 2012**



### **Forthcoming Events**

**25<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 6.30pm**

*Quiz Night and Fish and Chip Supper at Priory Methodist Church. Come and stretch your brain and feed your stomach! There will also be a talk by Colin McCartney of REMAP who will explain what he could make which may help you with your disability.*

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at 6.45pm**

*Christmas Meal at The Harvester, Riverfield Drive. A chance to catch up with friends and enjoy a start to the festive season. More details nearer the time.*

**February 2013**

*A show, theatre or cinema trip - details to be confirmed.*

*Flyers will be sent out nearer the time for all these events. Please make sure you return the form or phone Freda on 07815 196357 if you want to attend. If we don't hear from you we don't know you want to come!*

### **Recent Events**

**Visit to Shuttleworth Collection, Swiss Gardens and Birds of Prey Centre**



Thursday 23rd August dawned bright and sunny and FLAG members congregated outside Priory Methodist Church to await their 2 mini-buses to take them to the above collection.

Some members had booked to go to the Collection and the Swiss Gardens and others were touring the Collection and viewing the birds of prey.

On arrival, Freda briefed us on timings for the day and distributed our entrance tickets, and then off we went in different directions. The Birds of Prey centre was some distance away and one of the mini-buses helped to transport some of our members. It was an amazing display of flying and viewers were able to hold certain birds at the end of the performance. During this display, some members were strolling through the Swiss Gardens, admiring the beautiful plants, shrubs, lakes and trees as well as taking time to sit and admire the scenic views. The impressive Swiss cottage was in the

centre of the gardens as well as a few wandering peacocks.

After these two visits, it was time for lunch - either a hot meal in the restaurant or a picnic eaten outside at the picnic tables. Once energy was restored, it was time for a walk around the hangars to see a fantastic exhibition of planes, cars, bikes and an interesting photo gallery of the history of the Collection.

With many thanks once again to Freda, Tracey, Malcolm and all the FLAG team who helped make the event a very successful and enjoyable occasion.

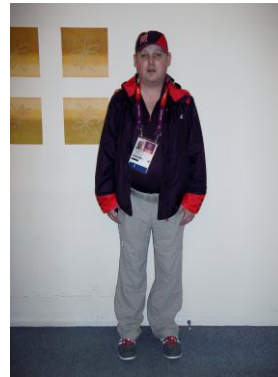
Carole and Lance Mason

### **Visit to London Zoo**



On 19<sup>th</sup> September a group of 24 FLAG members and volunteers went to London Zoo. After splitting into groups we visited different areas of the zoo to see penguins being fed, lions sleeping, monkeys playing, a bird show with parrots swooping over at head height, meerkats, giraffes, wild boars as well as butterflies and

snakes. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their day and even the weather was kind for us.



### **An Opportunity of a Lifetime!**

My Olympic experience is one I will never forget and I have some wonderful memories. My job was putting the Victory Ceremony podiums together and each venue was different. At Lords Cricket Ground I had further to carry the podium and the main part was heavier than the others. We only had about 2 minutes to get the podiums out and put together.

The venue at the Paralympics – the Royal Artillery Barracks - was a shorter distance and took less time as we had more people helping us put the podiums together.

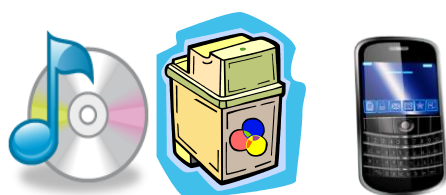
The journey to and from the venues from Bedford was an achievement for me.

I felt honoured to be chosen to be a Games Maker and I will never forget it. The thing I will remember the most was meeting the athletes and Lord Coe.

Tim Branson

Congratulations to Tim on being a Games Maker, what a wonderful experience.

*We would love to hear from any of you with your stories of things you have done or holidays you have had or tips and advice you feel other members would find useful. Feel free to contact us with your information and we will help you if necessary to write the article.*



## **Fundraising**

Our hard working fund raisers have successfully obtained donations from Bedford/Luton Community Foundation £1259, Bruce Wake Charitable Trust £500 and Co-Operative Community fund £2000. We are extremely grateful for these donations as it allows us to continue running FLAG and provide subsidised events.

## **Ways you can help fundraise**

Have you any unwanted CDs, DVDs or games you can donate to FLAG? We will use them to raise funds towards FLAG costs and for future events. Bring your unwanted items to any FLAG event you attend and give them to a member of the Committee. Unfortunately, we are unable to collect from you.

*Please note: All items must be in good condition, in their original case and have a barcode.*

*We can use the following game formats – Playstation 2&3, Xbox, Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, Nintendo DS and PSP.*

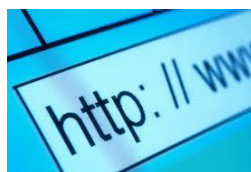
*Unfortunately, we cannot use CD singles or free CDs from newspapers.*

We are also collecting empty ink cartridges and old mobile phones to raise funds for FLAG. So if you have any of these that you no longer want bring them with you to a FLAG event.



Tracey Brightman has also raised £250 for FLAG funds by selling items on eBay. Have you got any unwanted items that you would be willing to donate to FLAG. We will then put them up for sale on eBay. We can only accept small items that are still in good condition, in good working order and you think will sell. You can bring the items along to any FLAG event, Drop-in or Tea and Coffee Afternoon.

Thank you for your help.



## **FLAG Website.**

Don't forget to look at FLAG's very own website for information about our events, etc. The address is [www.flagbedford.org](http://www.flagbedford.org).

## **INFORMATION FOR CARERS**

Caring for a disabled or elderly person can be difficult and stressful but there is help available.

**Carer's Allowance** - is a benefit to help a person who looks after someone that is disabled. You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for. To find out if you are eligible and how to claim you can contact the Carer's Allowance Unit or your local Job Centre Plus office.

### **Bedford Job Centre Plus.**

Wyvern House, 53-55 Bromham Road,  
Bedford MK40 2EH.

Telephone - 0845 604 3719

### **Local Authority Carers Services.**

#### **Carers' Assessments**

If you are caring for someone on a 'regular and substantial' basis you have the right in law to ask social services to carry out a Carers Assessment. A Carer's Assessment should be a full discussion of your own needs as far as education, training and work are concerned as well as any health problems or other commitments that you have. You should be told the outcome of the assessment and, if you are offered services, you should have the option of choosing between services arranged directly for you or receiving a direct payment to purchase your own services.

To request a Carer's Assessment contact:

Bedford Borough Council –  
01234 267422

Central Bedfordshire Council –  
0300 300 8036

## **Carers' Direct Payments**

The majority of direct payments are paid to a disabled person to pay for care. However in some cases a carer might be able to get a payment to buy services that help them. Guidance given to local councils suggests that they can give Carers Direct Payments for any purpose which helps them to sustain their role as a carer and promotes their own health and well-being. Social workers are encouraged to be imaginative in thinking about the ways direct payments might be used and carers have been awarded them to pay for:

- Taxi fares: Mobile phones
- Computers: Gym club membership
- Leisure classes: Training courses
- Counselling: Driving lessons
- Help with housework or gardening

### **G.P.**

Register your carer status with your practice.

Book an appointment to see your GP if your caring role is affecting your health. They should be able to tell you about the help available for carers.

### **Community Carer Groups.**



**Carers in Bedfordshire** is one of many organisations able to help carers. It is a not-for-profit registered charity for carers of family and friends. They can provide you with emotional and practical support,

advocacy, signposting, training and social environments according to your needs and wishes.

### **Contact -**

Carers in Bedfordshire  
Suite K, Sandland Court  
Pilgrim Centre, Brickhill Drive  
Bedford MK41 7PZ  
Telephone: 0300 111 1919  
Fax: 01234 341766  
Email: [contact@carersinbeds.org.uk](mailto:contact@carersinbeds.org.uk)  
[www.carersinbeds.org.uk](http://www.carersinbeds.org.uk)

### **The Carers Lounge**

A new Carers Lounge has opened in Bedford Hospital (South Wing), in the Admin Block on the ground floor. Any unpaid carer can get some advice or support in their caring role. At the Carers Lounge you will be able to meet carer support workers and on different days there will be staff that specialise in areas of supporting carers. For example you will be able to meet a member of staff from Carers in Bedfordshire Mental Health Team each Wednesday. They are there to offer advice, support and information to carers of all ages and to identify new carers. If you are visiting Bedford Hospital call in for a coffee and a chat.

**Contact -** Christina Offord  
Carers Lounge Co-ordinator,  
Carers in Bedfordshire.  
Mobile - 07794 005996.  
Email:  
[christina.offord@carersinbeds.org.uk](mailto:christina.offord@carersinbeds.org.uk).

Article by Tracey Brightman



### **Wheelmate**

Finding clean, accessible toilets and parking spaces when on the move can be a real challenge for wheelchair users. Wheelmate is a new smartphone app designed to change that.

Wheelmate gives you an instant overview of your nearest wheelchair-accessible toilets and parking spaces. Wheelmate is powered by wheelchair users who add and verify every single location themselves, ensuring it works the way it should.

Wheelmate is available for the iPhone and can be obtained from the Apple Appstore.

More information on Wheelmate can be found at [www.wheelmate.com](http://www.wheelmate.com).



### **Reminder!**

FLAG will cover the first £20.00 of travel costs if you require transport via taxis or volunteer aided travel. Individual members are responsible to cover any costs exceeding £20.00.

## Taxi Contact Numbers

Here is a reminder of the wheelchair accessible taxi companies that FLAG members use regularly.

If you use or know of any other taxi companies who are reliable and have wheelchair accessible taxis please let us know.

AGS Taxis                   Tel: 01234 340900  
                                  or 01234 218888

A1                            Tel: 01234 864750

Ambassador Cars   Tel: 01234 345151  
                                  or 01234 327000



## Volunteers Needed for FLAG Events, Please

**Join our team of volunteers who help adults with disabilities to enjoy social events and outings**

What is in it for you?

- All out of pocket expenses covered
- Enjoyable trips out, including theatre and meals
- Meet new friends
- Learn new skills/Access training
- Improve your CV

FLAG holds social events and outings and relies on volunteers to help with client transport and support. All voluntary help is highly valued and there is no expectation on your time. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

How can you help?

- Drive a disabled adult to and from social events
- Non personal support at social events

For further information about this or any FLAG events or to make suggestions about what you would like to do, or articles for the next newsletter please contact:

**FLAG, c/o Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue, Bedford MK41 9QJ.**  
**Tel: 07815 196357**  
**Email: [flag25@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:flag25@hotmail.co.uk)**  
**[www.flagbedford.org](http://www.flagbedford.org)**

### ***AND FINALLY -***

Don't forget our monthly coffee/tea and cake afternoons where you can meet the committee and other members for a chat over a cuppa!

***The next ones are on:***

***15<sup>th</sup> November***

***20<sup>th</sup> December – a festive one***

***24<sup>th</sup> January 2013***