

# THE Grapevine

February 17

50p

THE NEWSLETTER OF FLACKWELL HEATH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



## Lighting the Christmas Lights

The end of November seems a long time ago now, but the occasion is still memorable! During the afternoon, there was a children's tea party in the Community Centre, with entertainment by the Rainbows, Brownies and young dancers from Anna Rose Dance. Father Christmas, with Elf, was present in his grotto in the Sarney Room. As darkness fell, a crowd gathered in Jubilee Gardens, ready for the carols and the lighting of the tree. The singing was led by the Rev Chris Bull and the music was provided by the West Wycombe Brass Band. Alison Peach read the Christmas story. The great moment came when the lights were switched on by the Art Competition winners – aaah!

Then it was back inside for juice, mince pies, mulled wine for adults, and Mrs Indira Patel's Indian hot snacks (this year, kachori).

The whole occasion was organised by the Residents Association and the Community Association, with help from other people including the Methodists and the WI. A lot of work but a lot of fun too!



Photo: Anne Cameron

## Tree vandalised!

Flackwell's Christmas tree in the Jubilee Garden was permanently damaged when somebody cut off the top, presumably for their own use or to sell. A 'middle' piece about four foot long was recovered, with a neat cut at the top and a messy break at the bottom. The missing top section had the growing point; so the remaining tree will never be the right shape again, the side branches will take over and it will bush out.

**What a shame!**



## Art Competition Winners

As part of the festivities around turning on the Christmas Lights, The Residents Association arranged an art competition for Flackwell children. The winners were:

**Samantha Easden**, age 11, Carrington Junior School

**Isaac Hayes**, age 8, Juniper Hill School

**Jake Bowers**, age 5, Carrington Infant School

**Keila Gandy**, age 7, Juniper Hill School

**Poppy Austen**, age 3, Little Buddies Day Nursery

## NEWS FROM FLACKWELL HEATH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

### FHRA needs new committee members, or risks closure!

Appeals for new committee members have been made throughout the past year but even with two new members coming forward at the 2016 AGM it's been hard for our small group of volunteers to sustain our activities.

2017 AGM is fast approaching, with some long serving members stepping down this year, so some new blood is urgently needed.

Since it was set up in 2004, these are just a few things FHRA has done on behalf of the residents of Flackwell Heath;

- Our Planning and Environment Group represents village interests on planning issues in the village and surrounding locales. FHRA contributes to planning policy and comments on controversial planning applications in the village; it has been highly effective in this area and is held in high regard by WDC and other local bodies.
- Surveyed opinions on residents' wants from village life, acting on the results and representing them to the relevant authorities.
- Has, either directly or in conjunction with CWPC, installed or made significant contributions to playground equipment and sports equipment at the recreation ground. Without the donations, the current play park would not contain so many features. FHRA continues our active involvement in future developments.
- FHRA created Jubilee Garden and

provided and maintains flower and shrub filled planters throughout the village. We've planted lots of cherry trees, installed benches (including those on the cricket ground) and litter bins. We arrange regular village litter picks.

- With other village organisations, in conjunction with the Police and NAG, developed a Village Traffic Plan and instigated 'Speed Watches' leading to the purchase of MVAS equipment, managed by FHRA.
- Organised numerous events including quizzes, ballroom dances, race nights, wine tasting. Plus, village-wide events in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
- FHRA started and ran the Cherry Fayre for several years; and its demise was due to a lack of volunteers.
- In 2014 FHRA brought you the Village Fete and Picnic bringing many village groups and organisations together for a low-cost family day out.
- FHRA initiated the Christmas lights and Christmas tree and has done so every year since 2004. They added the permanent (living) tree and the lights have got better and better every year.



*Helping with Flackwell events can be fun! Carolyn and Vicky dispense mulled wine after the Christmas Lights were turned on. Photo: Anne Cameron*

We know from great feedback how much the 2016 Fete and Picnic (July) and Christmas Lights event with carols on Jubilee Garden and children's party were enjoyed by so many of you.

None of these things will happen without an active FHRA! There will be an immediate impact on these and other projects; the playground, more Christmas lights in the village centre, and significantly, representing village interests on WDC's local plan and its implications for Flackwell Heath.

The word 'committee' can be off-putting, but our meetings are quite sociable, only every six to eight weeks during busy times leading up to our events, but less frequently at quieter times.

FHRA is very proud of its achievements and our village would not be as great as it is without the Association and its members' work over the years. It would be an enormous shame for this work to cease simply due to a lack of volunteers. Please contact Janet Smith on 01628 520451 if you can help.

*Carolyn Leonard  
Chair of Planning and Environment  
Group  
01628526512  
fhra-planning-environment@  
flackwellheath.net*

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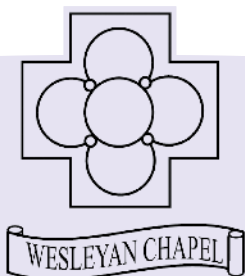
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## FLACKWELL HEATH METHODIST CHURCH

Tuesday 14 February, 9.15 – 11.45am – **TIME OUT FOR BUSY MUMS**. This group for Mums meets on the second Tuesday of every month during term-times, and gives them breathing time while their children are cared for in the crèche. Come and enjoy coffee, chat and support while doing such activities as adult colouring, pancakes and a recipe swap. To book a place in the crèche, please contact Vicky on 07979 541874.

Saturday 18 February, 10am to 12 noon – **WHO LET THE DADS OUT???** For Dads, granddads, uncles and any male carers to spend time with their under-fives to give Mum a break and share snack-time together. Bacon butties available!

Sunday February 26, 11am – **CIRCUIT CELEBRATION** AT JOHN HAMPDEN SCHOOL, HIGH WYCOMBE; please note there is no evening service at FHMC that day.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Do you ever wonder if there is a spiritual side to life? Flackwell Heath Methodist Church is running a free five-week course entitled FOOD FOR THOUGHT, which is an opportunity to discuss Life, the Universe and Everything - including God - over a free meal. Dates will be announced shortly, so if you are interested, or know someone who might be, please contact Paul or Suzanne Soper on 01494 673403.

All weekday groups meet at their usual times, with Sunday services at 11am and 6.30pm, except where specified above. Other activities and information can be found on our website [www.fhmc.org.uk](http://www.fhmc.org.uk); or please contact our senior steward Suzanne Soper on 01494 673403, or our minister Rev Nick Thompson on 01628 483985.

[www.fhmc.org.uk](http://www.fhmc.org.uk) [www.facebook.com/FlackwellHeathMC](http://www.facebook.com/FlackwellHeathMC)  
[prayer.requests@fhmc.org.uk](mailto:prayer.requests@fhmc.org.uk)



Christ Church has three services every Sunday: a 9.00am traditional Holy Communion service; a 10.30am more contemporary service with children's and youth groups, and a 6.30pm quieter evening service to end the day. There is something for everyone!

The greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher that ever lived... the preacher was Jesus and the sermon is known as '**The Sermon on the Mount**'. In it Jesus grapples with our values, attitudes, and relationships. A (spiritual) health warning, it is very practical, very applicable and life-changing. You do not want to miss this series – it will revolutionise your life. Every Sunday from January to July, 9am and 10.30am.

Christ Church is collecting for **One Can Trust**, the High Wycombe based food bank, from 29 January to 12 February. One Can Trust provides food parcels to local people in need. You can help by donating gifts of non-perishable food and goods via Christ Church any morning during that fortnight. A 'shopping list' is available from the One Can Trust website.

**CU@the Pub** meets on the 2nd Thursday evening of each month at The Crooked Billet Pub in Sheepridge Lane. If you fancy discussing Christian perspectives on 'life, the universe and everything' then this is the place for you! The next date is 9 February.

**'Prayer for Healing'** is offered regularly every 3rd Sunday morning as part of our 9am service of Holy Communion. The next date is Sunday 19 February. Healing Prayer continues to be offered every Sunday after the 10.30am service.

Christ Church is hosting a **Fabulous Film Night** on Friday 24 February

from 6 - 7.30pm. The film is 'Trolls', a 2016 DreamWorks animation. The film is suitable and open to all primary school aged children. The cost is £1 per person to cover the cost of refreshments (popcorn, drink and ice lolly).

**Fairtrade Fortnight** runs from 27 February to 12 March and reminds us to be fair to those who produce what we buy. Christ Church is a Fairtrade Church serving Fairtrade refreshments on Sundays and in Coffee Stop and runs a Fairtrade Shop on the 2nd Sunday of every month (next shop – Sunday 12 February).

**Ash Wednesday** (1st March): Mark the start of your Lent and preparations for Easter by coming to an Ash Wednesday Holy Communion (10am). In a service of quiet hymns and prayers maybe you will find a place to renew your faith and passion for God.

**Coffee Stop** is open to all... and serves fantastic fairly-traded tea and coffee with daily newspapers, and provides a warm and friendly place to meet old friends and make new ones. It runs every weekday morning during term-time from 9 - 11.30am. Why not come along...

Planning a **Wedding** for 2017/2018? Have you considered getting married in Church? We would be pleased to assist you in your thinking. There is information and other helpful advice on getting married in Church on the Church website.

Please contact the Church Office for further information on any of the above (Phone 01628 533004: 9.00am – 1.00pm Monday to Friday or email [admin@ccfh.org.uk](mailto:admin@ccfh.org.uk)) or visit [www.ccfh.org.uk](http://www.ccfh.org.uk)



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**Charities Fayre Outcome**

Alison Harvey reports that the grand total raised at the Charities' Fayre at Christ Church in November was a best-ever £2442.19. A big effort and a terrific result!

# Changes at Hawthornden Surgery

## - a statement from the Partners

You may be aware that the Hawthornden Surgery branch at Flackwell Heath has been closed since early December. The decision to shut this branch surgery was made after a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection took place and found that the building failed to comply with certain regulatory requirements. Sadly, time has marched on and the site — previously a private home — is no longer fit for the needs of modern General Practice. Disabled access is inadequate, for instance, while space constraints prevent us from offering a full range of services to patients – often causing follow up appointments to be arranged at the Bourne End surgery where there is greater access to equipment and staff. Furthermore, we run this surgery on a 'lone worker' basis with just a single doctor on premises most of the time – which is not feasible going forward.

We wish to stress, however, that the clinical service our patients receive has not been compromised. The CQC report has yet to be formally published; they have suggested that it will be available 'soon' at <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-554084482>. The feedback received so far has not raised any concerns over the standard of care offered. Furthermore, no appointments have been lost through this closure – all doctor sessions that would have run in Flackwell Heath have continued in Bourne End.

The partners of Hawthornden Surgery have carefully considered the issues raised by the CQC at the branch surgery, but unfortunately deem them to be insurmountable

due to the sheer scale of reconfiguration work required. For that reason we have now applied to NHS England and the Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group to close this branch permanently. We realise many patients will share our disappointment at this, but we hope they stay with us and continue to use the Hawthornden Surgery, less than two miles away, in Wharf Lane, Bourne End (and linked directly by bus).

We are, however, pursuing the possibility of establishing an entirely new building where we will be able to provide a wider range of services with plenty of parking in a location convenient to all of our patients.

We firmly believe this decision to be in the best interests of patient care at both surgeries.

The Partners are working with the Hawthornden Patient Participation Group and would welcome your views on how you feel we might ensure patients continue to receive the best services once Flackwell Heath branch surgery closes. We are seeking patient feedback until 6 February – this will be included in the Partners' submission to NHS England and Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group, for their consideration. Subject to their approval we anticipate closing the surgery permanently by early March. If you have comments, please contact Anne Ronan, Practice Manager at Hawthornden Surgery, Wharf Lane, Bourne End, Buckinghamshire, SL8 5RX or [hawthornden.management@nhs.net](mailto:hawthornden.management@nhs.net)

| Dates For Your Diary |                                                                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| February             |                                                                         |
| <b>Monday 13</b>     | Local History Group Fact Finding Forum, see page 6                      |
| <b>Sunday 19</b>     | Amblers walk, see page 6                                                |
| <b>Monday 20</b>     | Local History Group talk on Local Railways with John Gurney, see page 6 |
| March                |                                                                         |
| <b>Sunday 19</b>     | Amblers Walk, see page 6                                                |
| <b>Monday 20</b>     | Local History Group talk on Air Warfare see page 6                      |

## Neighbourhood Watch News

January '17



### HAPPY NEW YEAR

I hope that you all had a safe and enjoyable Christmas and I send my best wishes for 2017.

### NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?

Why not make it one of your New Year Resolutions to start a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your road? If you are already in a scheme, how about giving your scheme a bit of a refresher? I am very happy to help in this direction. Have any new residents been invited to join your scheme? Is your street signage up to scratch? Wycombe District Neighbourhood Watch Association (WDNHWA) has benefited from funding provided by the Co-op to purchase a supply of signs, so new street signs are readily available by contacting me.

Talk to anyone in an active Neighbourhood Watch scheme, and they will confirm the benefits – both practical and social – of belonging to a scheme. In addition, you can obtain favourable car and property insurance via A-Plan in High Wycombe who have agreed to be a sponsor of WDNHWA.

Visit the WDNHWA website for lots of useful information relevant to the Wycombe area::

<http://neighbourhoodwatchwycombe.org/>

### CYBERCRIME

Traditional acquisitive crime is rapidly being replaced by 'cybercrime' – crime that can either be facilitated by use of the internet or mobile phone networks, or which is dependent upon computer, phone and network technology. The use of 'social media' is also being more widely exploited to commit various forms of crime – deception,

fraud and various types of exploitation.

### Simple steps to stay safe online

It is thought that around 80% of cases of internet fraud could be avoided if people took some simple steps to protect themselves while online.

- Use a strong password to keep your details safe. This should contain upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols.
- Never give your personal banking details out online. Banks and companies will never ask for sensitive information via email or phone.
- Make sure you are using up-to-date internet security, including on your mobile phone.
- Ensure you have installed the latest operating system.
- Edit your privacy settings on social media and make sure only your friends can see your updates and information.

For further information about any of these topics or about Neighbourhood Watch, contact:

David Gresswell –  
Area Co-ordinator, Flackwell Heath

(Tel: 525019  
e-mail: [flackwell-nhwatch@talktalk.net](mailto:flackwell-nhwatch@talktalk.net))

Police General & Non-emergency  
number: 101

Public Safety Team  
(Anti-social behaviour): 01494 421087

Crimestoppers (Anonymous):  
0800 555 111 – watch out for a 'spoof'  
Crimestopper site

**Trading Standards (Consumer Direct):**  
**0345 4 04 05 06 (NEW dialling code)**

ACTION FRAUD: 0300 123 2040  
[www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

The Information Commissioner's Office:  
0303 123 1113

NHS: 111

## Remembering those who died in 1917 and are recorded on the Flackwell Heath War Memorial

William Rogers, 01 March

Reuben T Smith, 04 April

James Payne, Archibald T Pepper,  
Owen Rogers and Joseph  
Summerfield, all on 19 April

Arthur F Hall, 09 May

Arthur G Smith, 31 July

Joseph E Smith, 19 August

William J Easden, 22 August

Cecil TR Swanborough, 01  
September

Frank Baldwin, 09 September

Frank Stone-Wootton, 21 September

William Hills, 04 October

Ernest G Gibson, 26 October

James Anderson, 31 December

(Information courtesy of the Local  
History Group)

## Flackwell's Darkest Day

April 19 1917 was the darkest day of WWI for the villagers of Flackwell Heath. Four local men were killed in action, the first day of the Second Battle of Gaza. They were Lance Corporal James Payne and Riflemen Archibald T Pepper, Owen Rogers and Joseph Summerfield. They had all enlisted in the 1/8th battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, commanded by Lt-Col John Rhodes. He was also agent for the Little Marlow estate, on which many local men were employed, and had offered one pound for each man to join up. This was the equivalent of a week's wages or more for most of the men. Their fate was sealed.

Mike Dewey

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# FLACKWELL LOCAL AREA HISTORY GROUP



Our next talk at the Flackwell Heath Library will be on: Monday 20 February 2017 at 7.30pm.

## History of Local Railways - A nostalgic evening about our Local Railways

A welcome return to John Gurney who will give an updated version of this popular illustrated talk. The presentation on the history of the local railways will include pictures of the old branch line and its steam locomotives of yesteryear.

The talk will cover:

- The introduction of the railway to the area.
- An overview of the old Maidenhead to High Wycombe line, and the Marlow branch line.
- The construction of the main line through Wycombe.
- The Whitehouse tunnel disaster on the main line to London.

This is a ticketed event. The tickets are available at the library and are £5 (£3 to friends of FHCL).

The next date for the **Fact Finding Forum** at the Flackwell Heath Library is 13 February from 7.15 – 9.00pm.

**Flackwell Underground** - How much do you know about the clay, chalk & flint pits? Do you remember where

the bricks were made in Flackwell? Do you know about sinkholes, and even more mysterious pits/cavities? If you have any information or photos about any of these please come along and join us for a chat and a cuppa.

A date for your diary: Monday 20 March, from 7.30pm at the Flackwell Heath Library - **a Talk on Air Warfare** with John Gurney & Mike Dewey.

Warfare Takes to the Air – John and Mike will trace the early history of air warfare up to WWII. They will consider how balloons, airships and finally aircraft came to be used in warfare, and the important part that the Wycombe area played in both world wars.

## Family History Research – with Jan Fanning

Would you like to find out about where you come from? Would you like to know who your grandparents or great-grandparents were, and where they came from?

If you would like to discover more about your family using the internet but are unsure how to start, then why not try a session of Family History with Jan Fanning at Flackwell Heath Library? The sessions cost £2 for 50 minutes plus the cost of any photocopying. To arrange a session at the library please contact Jan on 01628 52750 or by email [janfanning@gmail.com](mailto:janfanning@gmail.com)



Like us on facebook/  
Flackwell Heath &  
Loudwater Local

History Group

[www.localhistorygroup.org.uk](http://www.localhistorygroup.org.uk)



## Regular Activities at the Flackwell Library

**Yoga sessions** – 10-11.15am. Contact Alexandra Alves 07786 332695.

**Coffee & Craft Group** – Every Friday between 10am and 12 noon. To find out more contact Alison Moyes (mobile 0753 248 5594) or Julia Baldwin (mobile 0797 345 8977).

**Bounce & Rhyme for under 5s** - Every Thursday during term time from 10.30 to 11am. No need to book, just turn up.

**Sewing Bee** - Held on the 4th Wednesday of every month, between 7 and 9pm. To find out more please call Alison on 0780 3044 298.

**Family History Research** – with Jan Fanning, see Local History Group article.

*Please call into the library to see updated details of all these activities, Flackwell Local Area History Group events and any new events that may be arranged from time to time.*

## Flackwell Amblers

If you would like to join us on Sunday 19 February 2017, The Flackwell Amblers will be going for a walk in Burnham Beeches. We will be meeting at the ex-Budgen's car park at 10am. This walk will last approximately 2 hours and is undertaken at your own risk. Please wear walking boots or strong shoes. NB This walk may be subject to change at short notice due to prevailing weather conditions. Parking charge applies. New walkers always welcome, just turn up on the day!

The next date for your diary is Sunday 19 March.

C. Barker

## Flackwell Heath Golf Club Not just golf !

We run regular Afternoon Teas, Sunday Lunches (with monthly discounted carvery lunches), Quiz Nights, Bridge and a variety of social activities. The dining room with its superb views over the course and our boardroom for business meetings are available for hire with discounted rates for social members. Weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, wakes or Christenings can all be catered for - from finger buffets to fine dining. The next Afternoon Tea will be held on Thursday, 9th February 2017. Discount carvery lunches on Feb 26, March 26 (Mother's Day), April 16, May 21 and June 18 (Father's Day). Social Membership is currently available for as little as £80 per annum and if you join now you can enjoy 15 months for the price of 12. To find out more about social membership or receive details of the above and all our other social functions visit the club website [www.fhgc.co.uk](http://www.fhgc.co.uk) or call 01628 520929

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## Flackwell Heath Community Library

### NEW: Library Buddy service

The Library Buddy service is for Buckinghamshire residents who find it difficult to visit the library in person for any reason and they have a friend, neighbour or relative who is willing to act on their behalf, and who is also a Bucks library member. It is particularly designed for housebound customers who have a regular visitor who would also be able to bring them library materials.

The Library Buddy card allows your nominated person to issue and return items using your library card and then deliver them to your home. To make this even easier for you, there is a 31 day loan period, no overdue charges and no reservation fees on books and audiobooks for Library Buddy card

holders. These concessions apply to books and audio books only, all other charges do still apply and will be payable on these accounts.

If you wish to be a 'Buddy' for another library customer, then please call into the library to request this. We will then write to the customer asking for their authorisation. Once this is received we will update the library registration information to link you as the 'Buddy' for that customer. If the person you wish to be a 'Buddy' for is not a library customer, then we will arrange for someone to visit them to register them as a customer.

This arrangement is an enhanced replacement for the previous 'Good Neighbour' scheme and will be reviewed with the customer, and continued authorisation sought, every two years.



Flackwell Heath Community Library,  
Chapel Road, Flackwell Heath,  
HP10 9AA Tel: 0845 230232  
email: fhcl@flackwellheath.net  
web: www.buckscc.gov.uk/libraries

### JIGSAW AND PAPERBACK LIBRARY...

.....made a grand total of £918.30 for the Community Centre in 2016.

If you are a jigsaw fan, and want to try some new ones, come along and see our enormous selection. We display about one-fifth of our stock each month, and there is a continuing turnover with the return of old ones and donations of new ones. The paperbacks include non-fiction, classics, family sagas, romance, mysteries, thrillers, humour and historical dramas.

The library is in the Sarney Room at the Community Centre on the first Wednesday of every month, from 1.30 to 3.15pm. The charge is 50p per item.

## Flackwell Heath Women's Institute

### Morning WI

December.....We had a festive selection for our refreshments this month with sausage rolls, mince pies and cake instead of the usual biscuits. A large contingent from Carrington School (all year 6) then entertained us with the Christmas story and carols very tunefully which everyone enjoyed.

We had decided to send the proceeds of our raffle to Wycombe Women's Aid for this month, as giving support to women suffering from domestic abuse is one of the possible causes for which the National Federation may be campaigning, depending on the outcome of members' votes.

January.... This was quite a busy morning, first discussing possible activities in the coming months etc and it is subscription time! We were also finalising arrangements for those attending a lunch at Wycombe Heights Golf Club the following week. No speaker this month but we played a game of Pictionary to finish the meeting.

Next month the speaker will be Brian Clews, on 'Birds in Winter'.

He is very knowledgeable on wildlife generally.

### Evening WI

In December, Voice Versa (a group of four singers plus keyboard player) entertained us with a 'Christmas Compendium' of song, readings and a Chopin mazurka.

Our stall at the Christ Church Fayre did well.

The January speaker, Niki McCann, told us about Waltham Place near Maidenhead, where the Oppenheimer family have an estate with an organic biodynamic farm and garden. The garden is run on the principle of accord with nature – for example they live with ground elder by planting competitors which will outgrow it. It all sounded well worth a visit, which we hope to arrange later in the year.

February's speaker is Pam Warren from Bucks Vision. She is bringing a peg loom for us to have a try. Before then we shall have our customary post-Christmas lunch (anything but turkey!), this year at La Bodega.

*Brenda Aldridge and Sue Arnautov*



## Booking the Community Centre

The Community Centre, either the Main Hall or the Sarney Room or both together, can be booked through the website: flackwellheathcommunitycentre.org.uk If you don't have internet access, bookings packs including a booking form are available from the Library.

The bookings schedule is also available on line, under What's On/Calendar. Although the Centre is reasonably well utilised, there are still a few opportunities during the day and in the evenings, and especially at weekends when children's parties are very popular.

# Richard Chalmers gets British Citizen Award

The British Citizen Awards (BCAs) were launched in January 2015 by a consortium of companies, 'to recognise exceptional individuals who work tirelessly and selflessly to make a positive impact on society. BCAs are awarded twice annually, and recognise 'everyday' people whose achievements may otherwise be overlooked'.

Flackwell's Richard Chalmers was nominated for a BCA by his friend, Juliet Auld, for his work with Flackwell bereavement group 'Oasis'. She said: "Richard has truly made a difference to the lives of many people, who would have really struggled without his support. Richard is very thoughtful, kind, generous and caring, especially with his time, and he always goes the extra mile, which is why I feel he deserves this recognition."

Richard, aged 51, turned to his local church for support when his father-in-law died, and was so overwhelmed by the help and support he received that he decided to undergo training in bereavement care. In 2000, he joined the team leading to the self-help group, Oasis. He co-launched an evening group in 2005; it has gone from strength to strength, and now benefits more than 100 people each month, ranging in age from 40 to 96 years old.

Oasis aims to be varied, engaging and upbeat, whilst offering people the support, advice and companionship they need. The group holds a number of activities, such as talent nights and wine tasting, as well as organising day trips to Buckingham Palace, Longleat Safari Park and St George's Chapel. Oasis also celebrated the Queen's 90th Birthday last year by organising a festive

afternoon tea (as reported in the June 16 Grapevine - Ed.).

Richard runs the monthly evening groups and organises day trips and holidays. The holidays are a great success, and the group have visited seaside resorts in England, as well as a trip to Paris.

Despite working full-time as a golf club manager, Richard is committed to the group. He is helping other local communities to open up similar groups in the surrounding area. His long-term vision is to create a families' group and a men's group, to try and encourage more people to come.

Richard is one of 29 medallists who will be honoured at a prestigious ceremony on January 26, at the Palace of Westminster.

Speaking about his nomination, Richard said: "I was extremely surprised when I found out I had been nominated for the award, and to receive such recognition for something I truly love doing is wonderful. We try to help as many people as possible within the community, whether they have lost their partner, a parent or child, and it is so nice to see the relationships form within the group. Everyone in the community wants to help and support Oasis, which is amazing. I have a fantastic group of people behind me, including my wife and children, and I couldn't do it without them."



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Secretary: Chris Thomas  
01628 520361  
Treasurer: Alison Harvey  
01628 530186

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## Grapevine

Editor: Sue Arnautov  
58, Chapman Lane, Flackwell Heath,  
HP10 9BD • 01628 523907  
email: [grapevine@flackwellheathcommunitycentre.org.uk](mailto:grapevine@flackwellheathcommunitycentre.org.uk)  
Delivery: Pauline Cooper 01628 522562  
Design: [jillw.mjdesign@btinternet.com](mailto:jillw.mjdesign@btinternet.com)  
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