

THE Grapevine

February 2025

50p

THE NEWSLETTER OF FLACKWELL HEATH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



Christmas 2024



Heath Singers
Concert:
see page 8

Northern Woods
Bus Stop

Charity Fayre: see
page 2



Decorations in Old Kiln Road



Carol Service

The carol service at Christ Church was an absolute joy. 220 people attended the 6:30pm service with additional seats having to be brought in to accommodate everyone. I was lucky, having been roped into joining the Christmas choir with three other men and about 30 ladies, I had a front row seat. The Revd. Gill Taylor got us underway saying everything would proceed smoothly without announcement. Brave words! The church starts off in darkness and Gill then says that lovely line about a light shining in the darkness. Then, a long pause as Gill suddenly realised there was no light for her to read the next bit! Result, much merriment from one and all and that wonderful sense that we're going to have a great evening.

The service proceeded with hearty singing of traditional, well-loved carols conducted by Paul Churchouse and accompanied by his wife, Jan. Then the highlight - the vicar's Christmas sermon. Now I'm sure many of you will have dozed through sermons in the past, but I doubt that applies to one of James'. In previous years, he's been brave enough,

some may say foolhardy, in taking his wife on regarding the amount of Christmas lights at the vicarage (very obvious who won that one!). This year, we were treated to him bursting into song in the middle of his sermon with a particularly tuneful rendition of Mariah Carey's 'All I Want For Christmas is You!' I've never heard a congregation burst into applause during a sermon before, so well done James, another first!



The service concluded with 'Hark The Herald Angels Sing' before everyone somehow managed to fill the foyer to the brim to consume mince pies and a very tasty mulled wine. All in all a great community evening - can't wait until next year.

Craig Lewis



The Three Horseshoes

Ben and Krystel, Flackwell Heath residents and owners of the Coach House on the green in Wooburn, have taken on The Three Horseshoes. The pub is now open most evenings and, speaking to the chef recently, we hear that they will be serving food Wednesdays to Sundays - in the evenings during the week and from lunchtime at the weekend. There is also the distinct possibility of a carvery starting soon. The Grapevine team hopes to report back in the near future.



Sunrise over Bloom Wood Photo: Craig Lewis



FLACKWELL HEATH
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

An update from Flackwell Heath Residents' Association

Key dates:

For **Repair Cafe**, **Litterpick** and **Food Market**, please see the diary on the back page.

FHRA AGM: Tuesday 25 February, 7.30pm - all welcome

Easter Trail: Saturday 19 April 10am-12pm, starting at Christ Church

Heath Fest: Saturday 12 July 1pm-10pm Carrington Field

A very happy new year to all the residents of Flackwell Heath!

We really hope you enjoyed Christmas on the Heath - it was extremely well attended and certainly got us in the festive spirit. We also raised more funding towards the village Christmas lights - many thanks for all your support.

We have lots planned for the upcoming year. Our regular monthly activities will continue: Repair Cafe and Litterpick on the first Saturday of every month; and the Monthly Food Market on the third Saturday of each month.

Easter Trail

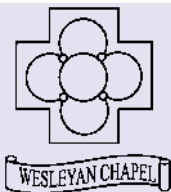
We will once again be joining forces with Christ Church and Flackwell Heath Methodist Church to run an Easter Trail in the village on Holy Saturday (Saturday 19 April). This is a fun, free activity for all ages - follow the trail around the village and end up at the Easter Cafe with tea, coffee, hot cross buns and a prize for every completed trail. You can collect your map from Christ Church, Chapel Rd between 10am-11.30am. The Easter Cafe is open to all at the Methodist Church between 10.30am-12noon.

Heath Fest

Heath Fest is returning for its fourth year on 12 July 2025. Tickets will be going on sale soon - put the date in your diary!

Get in touch

As always, if you have any queries, feedback, ideas or would like to get involved with the FHRA, please drop us an email: hello@fhra.co.uk



FLACKWELL HEATH METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY 2 FEBRUARY, 11am – MORNING WORSHIP with a sermon from Rev. Kate Strange followed by our COMMUNITY LUNCH. All are welcome – please put your name on the list in the church so that we have an idea of numbers.

SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY, 11am – HOLY COMMUNION led by Rev. Kate Strange.

SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY, 11am – CONTEMPORARY MORNING WORSHIP with a sermon from Rev. Paul Cudby.

SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY, 11am – MORNING WORSHIP led by Neil Manthorpe.

SATURDAY COFFEE MORNING: Every Saturday, the church is open from 10am until 12noon to provide a friendly space to enjoy company, so please just drop in.

GIRLS' BRIGADE meets in the church on Tuesday evenings from 5.45 during term time. If anyone needs further information, please contact us at suzstoll@aol.com and we will put you in touch.

PARENT AND TODDLER (PAT) GROUP – in the church from 9.15 on Wednesday mornings during term time. Please see the Flackwell Heath Wednesday PAT Group Facebook page for details.

FHMC WOMEN'S GROUP meets on the third Thursday of each month in the church from 10.30am to 12noon. Tea and coffee are available from 10am.

PLAY & PRAISE – in the church from 9.15 on Friday mornings during term time.

We run a **LINE DANCING** class on Wednesday evenings from 7.30 to 9pm. For more information, please contact Grace on 07929 517064.

To book the hall for events, please contact Grace on the above number.

If you have specific prayer requests or need any information, please contact us on the links below; our Facebook page has regular updates.

www.facebook.com/FlackwellHeathMC
prayer.requests@fhmc.org.uk



February always feels to me like an in-between month. We've moved far enough away from Christmas and the New Year to be free of any leftover festivities, but we haven't yet reached the warmer days and lighter evenings the spring will bring. It's a bit of a non-month (sorry to anyone who really likes February) that's in need of a bit of joy.

Perhaps that's why Valentine's Day has become such a big deal. That's me speculating, of course, because in all truth the history of the day itself is pretty murky.

It started off as a day to remember the life of St Valentine, a Christian martyr who lost his life in Rome in the second century. There's very little we know for sure about Valentinus, as he was known then. He was either a priest or a bishop (but we aren't sure), and he worked either in Rome or Terni (again, we aren't sure). There might well have been two people called Valentinus who were merged into one by the church. It's mostly agreed by historians that it was Claudius II who executed Valentinus (one of them) on 14th February, but what is for certain is that there isn't a lot of romantic love in St Valentine's story.

So how did we get from all that to our modern Valentine's Day celebrations? Without wishing to sound like a broken record...we aren't sure. It seems to have started in the Middle Ages, when some loved-up poems started to be written in the name of St Valentine. According to some it may be because certain birds start to mate in February – but however we got there, by the 1700s it was common for people to exchange gifts and notes with their loved ones on 14th February every year. The tradition has continued ever since.

While it can all get a bit soppy on Valentine's Day, there's something important hidden amid all the cupids and flower bouquets. It's a good thing to be

thankful for those we love, and to remember why we love them. It's a chance to remember those we've loved and lost, and to think about what it means for us to love one another.

It's something we think regularly about as a church. Our mission at Christ Church is to love the village of Flackwell Heath, and we seek to do this in lots of different ways. There's **Coffee Stop**, our free community coffee morning open every weekday. There's **Play Café**, **YouNique** and **Messy Church**, open to families and children. There's **Oasis**, our bereavement group for those who have lost a loved one. We have the **Community Pantry** on Thursday mornings for those who need a little bit of practical help. Then there's our **Sunday** and **midweek services**, our **pastoral support**, and those privileged moments we have walking alongside families at life's biggest moments: **baptisms**, **weddings**, and **funerals**. All ways of loving our community.

If you want to find out more about any of these, you'll find information on the church website or by contacting the Church Office (details below). And we really are here for everyone. It doesn't matter if you haven't been to church before or if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian: Christ Church is your church, and we are here to remind you that we are all deeply loveable and deeply loved.

You might not find that inside any Valentine's Day cards, but it's the truth. Have a peaceful February.

Go gently,

James Dwyer, Vicar of Flackwell Heath

Contact

Phone: 01628 533004
Email: admin@ccfh.org.uk
Website: www.ccfh.org.uk

Regular services

9am Holy Communion
10.30am Morning Worship
6.30pm Various services

Proposed Developments

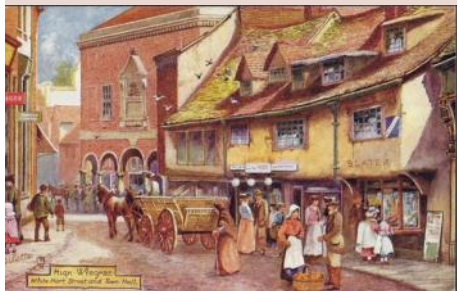
The proposal to develop the **legion site** has now been withdrawn. Who knows what will happen next?

Aries House development: the application has been recommended for refusal on the grounds of parking issues and lack of suitable access for delivery vehicles. Nevertheless, at time of writing it is still formally 'awaiting decision'.

Flackwell Local Area History Group

Our next talk will be on Monday 3rd March 2025 from 7.30pm

'Wycombe in 1800: A Borough of Shopkeepers' with Jackie Kay



When Napoleon (or more likely one of his contemporaries) dubbed England as a 'Nation of Shopkeepers', the already long-established Borough at the heart of Wycombe was serving the surrounding rural area in many ways. Halfway from London to Oxford, its impressive High Street accommodated many well-to-do families and serviced the needs of through-travellers; but where were the regular shops and their shopkeepers? And how did households typically obtain their provisions? 'Shops' and 'Shopping' have continually evolved over centuries, and the late eighteenth century was a period of significant change. In 1786 the 'retail traders of the Borough of Chipping Wycombe' were among those who collectively petitioned parliament 'to be relieved of the most grievous burthen of the tax on retail shops'. Local records of shops and shop keeping from this time are patchy, but many traces of retail activities can be found if you look long and hard enough for them...

Jackie Kay has lived in High Wycombe for over forty years and gives talks on

various subjects concerning the town's past and present. A former Chairman of the High Wycombe Society and Editor of its quarterly Newsletter, she is also an active member of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Council, helping to organise their annual 'Bucks Local History Network' conference. Now retired, Jackie's focus on the immediate vicinity of her home is in contrast to a past career as a software engineer, with a brief spell in 'interactive television'. Jackie was just one of very many individuals playing their part in helping the world adjust to the arrival of computers and the brave new information age they have brought in.

This is a ticketed event. The tickets are available from the library on Tuesday 28th January at £5 (£3 to friends of FHCL). Please note the doors will open at 7:15pm, and that tickets will not be available on the night.

Our next talk will be on Monday 28th April 2025 from 7.30pm.

'What have the Romans Done for Flackwell Heath?' with Nigel Rothwell

Family History Research If you would like help or guidance, please contact Gill Kyle on 01494 436314 or by email donkyle@btinternet.com



Flackwell Heath, Loudwater
& Wooburn Local History Group
www.localhistorygroup.org.uk

A Guide for the perplexed



Two years ago the writer Cory Doctorow described a process whereby online platforms experience a systematic decline in quality over time - a sort of Parkinson's Law for websites. He identified three stages in this process. First, a website offers a high quality service which attracts many users. Next, the site begins to prioritise business customers and exploit ordinary users. For example, the latter may begin to see more, and more intrusive, adverts. User privacy may be compromised, and delivered content may be skewed by algorithms to contain more of what the site wants the user to see rather than what s/he actually wants. Finally the site's quality deteriorates for both its ordinary and commercial users in order to maximise shareholder profits, disgruntled users leave en masse, and the site goes into terminal decline. Mr Doctorow coined a rather rude term for this process, which won't be repeated here, but the word was named the American Dialect Society's Word of the Year for 2023 and the Macquarie Dictionary's Word of the Year for 2024, so has achieved considerable recognition (a neologism).

If you think that the above describes what has happened to a very famous web search engine, you would not be the first person to make this connection. Now, alternatives may be emerging. One is Perplexity AI, a generative AI based search tool, which will search the web in response to plain English questions and produce a summary response. All AIs are still notoriously prone to errors and even to making stuff up, so should never be completely trusted, but importantly Perplexity gives a list of the sources it has used to create its reply that you can check. There's a web interface and apps for iOS and Android.

Perplexity seems to be at the first stage: for the time being basic use is free, it doesn't have ads, and although it will keep nagging you to sign in or login, you don't have to. Maybe this will all change as the Doctorow process sets in, but until then you might like to give it a try.

Malcolm Wiles

The **Charity Fayre** at Christ Church was well attended, with people enjoying coffee/tea with cakes and buying things at the various charity stalls. It was good for local charities to speak with people, and there were a few new volunteers. In total £2,500 was raised for the charities.

Karin Brown

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Flackwell Heath Women's Institute

Morning WI

In December we had a most interesting talk given by Ruth Walne about the charity "Mercy Ships" which visit West African countries and Madagascar, bringing medical teams of volunteers who perform life changing operations on children and adults from the more rural areas. Ruth is theoretically a retired nurse (and member of the Flackwell Evening WI) who spends 10 weeks at a time working out there. We saw a video of various patients, before and after their treatments, which was quite amazing. The latest ship (of 3) was purpose built with 3 operating theatres and up-to-date equipment and, in addition to the medical staff, volunteers work on board covering all other functions (except ship's crew), at their own expense.

We had a lovely Christmas lunch in Christ Church hall, catered by Richard Chalmers.

As New Year's Day was on the first Wednesday of the month we had to meet the following week, which may have accounted for a smaller attendance (some may have forgotten!), but just had social time after normal business.

Next month our speaker will be Barry Stringer MBE (also from the village) on 'Life as a Yeoman Warder'.

Brenda Aldridge

Evening WI

Have you ever found old letters and wondered what had happened to those people? Well, at December's meeting, Becky Holt bought along some old letters she had bought in lockdown and read them to us. But in January, she came back with the results of investigating who they were and what happened to them at the end of the war and any descendants, with photos and more letters she had discovered.

In February David Wilding will be telling us how his team are helping to develop Otmoor Nature Reserve to help fight for Nature's future. With plenty of scientific research going on, he will be telling us how they are pushing for change across the UK and around the world. Come along and ask your questions.

Helen Waller

The Golf Club

Maidenhead Golf Club will be merging with Flackwell Heath during 2025.

The Maidenhead Advertiser reports that the Maidenhead course is to be sold to Cala Homes in a deal made with the previous Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Council. It tells us that the club has received £15.9m from the borough in order to buy off the remainder of the lease which was not due to expire until 2039. Although a significant portion of that money will need to be paid in tax, it is hoped that some may be of use in improving the Flackwell Heath site. Over the current year, Maidenhead members will be able to play on either site, with full transfer taking place in 2026.

The ladies of the Flackwell club have told us "We are thrilled to be merging with Maidenhead and look forward to meeting their ladies."

Andy Ferguson, Chair of the Flackwell club says "We are incredibly pleased to be merging with Maidenhead. Combining the strengths of both clubs and their respective memberships is the perfect match".

Brian Aldridge, Club Captain at Maidenhead says "Maidenhead Golf Club are delighted to have found a new home for our members. With our long-shared history and proximity to Maidenhead, Flackwell Heath Golf Club is a perfect fit."



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Thank You

To the litter pickers who turned up in bad weather on the first Saturday of the year in order to tidy the village after the Christmas celebrations. Particular thanks to the person who cleared up the droppings left outside Juniper school on Christmas Eve – we are fairly sure they weren't left by Rudolph! And to all those who tidied up at any other time.



To the people who donated to the RBL Poppy Appeal.

Susan Robinson says "The 2024 door to door collection in Flackwell Heath raised a record £1144.78. This was an amazing amount to have collected, and is very much appreciated."

To the youngsters who rescued Wendy Mulhall when her car skidded to a halt on Treadaway Hill on that snowy Saturday in January (see p6).

To all those in the village who donate time, money and/or effort to improve lives in the village or the wider world.

Knit for the Day Centre

Rita Liddiard is responding to an initiative from a smoothie drinks company. It involves knitting little hats to sit on top of their bottles. If we send up 1000 knits, they will donate £300 to the day centre. Lots of stuff online if you search for 'innocent big knit', including patterns for the



hats which range from beginner to expert; although the easy ones get to that 1000 quicker, you might fancy the odd challenge. Your editor, nothing if not cocky, tried the pineapple one.

Finished hats should be dropped off at the day centre, Monday to Thursday 9am-3pm, before May 30. More information from Rita on 01628 521723.



FLACKWELL HEATH COMMUNITY LIBRARY

A New Way to Borrow Books and Interact with the Library

Discover the Spydus Mobile App, a new and convenient way to borrow your books, manage your loans and use some new features only available on the App.

With the Spydus Mobile app you can:

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- Discover: new arrivals; reading lists; featured titles and personalised recommendations
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- Use your camera to issue your books



Download the app for free on your Android or iOS device.

Regular events

Bounce & Rhyme for under 5s is every Thursday 10.30-11.00am during school term time. No need to book – just turn up

Knitting & Crochet group is every Friday 10.00am-12.00noon. For details contact Glen Colman via email: colgas39@aol.com

Craft & Chat group runs on the fourth Wednesday of each month 7.00-9.00pm. For details contact Alison on 07803 044 298 or admayall@btinternet.com

The library may be booked for meetings and other activities outside of normal opening hours. Contact Michael Russell - michael@sedgemoor.plus.com

Opening hours

We are open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 10.00am-5.00pm. On Saturdays we are open 10.00am-1.00 pm.

Keep up-to-date

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page or the library noticeboard for the latest library news.

Flackwell Heath Community Library, Chapel Road, Flackwell Heath, HP10 9AA

Tel: 01296 382415 email: fhcl@flackwellheath.net

web: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/libraries/>



Snow Hazard

Wendy Mulhall reports:

I had stupidly gone out for the evening on Saturday 4th January in spite of the heavy snow falling when I left home and, although I only went to Beaconsfield, the drive home alone after midnight was horrendous on very icy slippery roads.



My biggest worry was getting up to Flackwell Heath, and as I was approaching Treadaway Road my car started skidding dangerously and I narrowly avoided hitting some young men walking up the hill after their night out. The car then completely ground to a halt and the young men, my knights in shining armour, immediately rushed over to try to assist me. A young lady who had driven past me 5 minutes earlier took the trouble to walk down the road to reassure me, and my heroes ended up enlisting some other chaps walking home; between them they managed to push my car up by sheer brute force to ensure I would be able to get onto the Straight Bit for the last part of the journey home.

The whole experience, although very frightening for me, was incredibly uplifting and I am so very pleased to be living within such a wonderful community as Flackwell Heath where other people are prepared to go the extra mile to help out.

Toes R Us Foot Health

Wendy Mulhall MCFHP MAFHP

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Sue Arnautov

We have received further memories of Sue.

Helen Waller writes on behalf of the WI:

We are missing Sue very much, as a stalwart member of Flackwell Heath Evening WI.

Behind all good clubs is a highly organised, reliable person ensuring all the administration work is completed. We were lucky. Sue was our WI's diligent long serving committee member – a gem. She had a fantastic memory, an eye for detail and was very vocal in her opinions which she would have thought about and researched. She joined Flackwell Heath Evening WI in 1979! So there have been plenty of meetings, visits, talks, Investigation and Discovery days, and county and national events Sue was part of, and actively reported on in the Grapevine in many cases. She was an invaluable member of our inter-county quiz team over the years too.

Sue was a great friend and support to the many new members who came to our institute over the years. She served as our secretary for many years and as the minutes secretary and media contact latterly.



There was also another side of Sue which members did not often see. She enjoyed cooking and at many committee meetings held at her

house we would taste biscuits and cakes she had discovered at one of the many Denman College courses she attended. They were unusual and delicious. She always made tasty marmalade too to sell at any charity event and has passed on the skills.

She embraced all the aims of WI – friendship, learning new skills, trips, events at our WI, county and national level over 25 years.

Fiona Dolamore writes on her involvement with the Wycombe Philosophy Association:

Sue was a member of the Wycombe Philosophy Association for about 15 years. This was a small, informal group that met one evening a week, during term time, at The Swan pub in West Wycombe. We discussed a wide range of philosophical topics during the 20 year lifetime of the group. Recommended tutors came from Oxford, London, Reading, Bristol and



A Bright Future for Carrington Infant and Junior Schools

Christmas is always an exciting time, but in December 2024, there was extra cause for celebration at Carrington Infant School and Carrington Junior School, as both schools received 'good' results from their Ofsted inspections.

Quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management and early years provision, were all assessed and rated 'good'. The inspection reports included some warm commendations: "The Carrington Infant school has an ambitious curriculum. From the beginning of Reception Year, the school has identified the key knowledge and skills that it wants children to learn." One parent summarised the thoughts of many others, saying, "Staff do everything they can to make the school the best it can be for all children."

"Carrington Junior School is rightly proud of its welcoming and caring ethos. Staff do their utmost for all children to succeed. Pupils' academic achievement and well-being have equal priority. The school ensures that the conditions are just right for pupils to 'believe, achieve and succeed'."

And there has also been another change. Recently the Carrington Schools Federation combined the governing bodies of both schools with the aim that:

- All staff will be incredibly well supported as they work together with one board of governors to set the strategic direction for both schools.

- Both schools can build on a close professional working relationship between the two Headteachers.

- Working together more efficiently will increase opportunities for pupils, staff and governors and sharing resources and expertise will deliver a strong leadership team.

The term finished on a high note with staff and governors delighted to have received such good results in their inspections. But as always, there was still much to do before the Christmas holidays. Nativity plays are always a feature and both schools threw themselves into the planning and fun of their performances.

The two headteachers Mrs Kate Cliffe (Infant school) and Mrs Emma Cameron (Junior school) should feel justifiably proud of all that has been achieved and there is so much more to look forward to in 2025.

Juliet Bates



High Wycombe. Topics ranged from Philosophy of Science, Maths, Language, Education and Law, to aspects of Moral Philosophy and Eastern Philosophy. Group membership waxed and waned over the years, but Sue remained a constant.

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Heath Singers' Christmas Concerts

There was a change of format in this year's Heath Singers' Christmas concerts. The programme on Friday, Dec 6th told the Christmas story through some usual as well as some not-so-usual carols, also some general Christmas songs. An element of comedy mid-programme was provided by Kathy Barrett and Jan Churchouse, performing a version of Tchaikovsky's 'Sugar Plum Fairy,' blissfully unaware of the hilarious action taking place in the pulpit behind them (a false leg even appeared over the edge at one stage which then rather inconveniently dropped off!). Jean Milsted was to blame for these antics, for which she received enthusiastic applause.

The choir sang beautifully, with a full tone and with good intonation. The audience enjoyed participating in some of the items, whilst Father Christmas put on an off-the-wall routine that had people rolling around in their seats.

The following day, took a different form with an earlier starting time of 4pm, which enabled the Juniper Hill School choir to participate, as well as suiting many of our regular audience members. Juniper's choir sang their own song 'Mistletoe' by Justin Bieber and became more and more confident as they progressed. They also joined the Heath Singers in a performance of 'The Cowboy Carol', complete with the whoops and cheers that feature in the music. The children behaved really well, especially bearing in mind that it was a two hour-long concert. Our thanks go to Luisa Davis and headteacher Clare Garnett for enabling this to happen, and of course to Father Christmas for his unstinting support.

Two notable additional items included young Audrey Townsend, aged 6, singing 'Walking in the Air' accompanied by her mum Larisa, and also a trio of singers from the choir singing some early music items 'a capella' (unaccompanied).

As ever a brilliant range of food was provided on both occasions by choir members and also Tesco's, so a big thank you is due to those concerned.

Audience numbers were high, so next year, it is clearly a matter of 'book early to avoid disappointment'.

Paul Churchouse



The Juniper Choir

Dates for your Diary

Regular Events

Litter-pick: first Saturdays (Feb 1, Mar 1) Start from Jubilee Gardens at 10am.

Repair Cafe: Also first Saturdays Community Centre, 10am-12noon.

Paperback & Jigsaw Library: first Wednesdays (Feb 5, Mar 5), Community Centre, 1-2.45pm.

Food market: third Saturdays (Feb 15, Mar 15), Three Horseshoes car park, 9am-12noon.

March

Monday 3: Local history group talk 'Wycombe in 1800: A Borough of Shopkeepers' with Jackie Kay, library, 7.30pm (see p4)

Tuesday 25: FHRA AGM, 7.30pm, venue TBA

Flackwell Heath Repair Cafe



Saturday 1 February: 10am-12pm

The Sarney Room, Flackwell Heath Community Centre

Repairs available for:

Bicycles / Small electrical
Knife sharpening
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Sun, 10am-10.30pm

Flackwell Heath Community Association

Chairman: Chris Cramer
01628 526129

Secretary: Chris Thomas
01628 520361

Centre Bookings

Please use bookings enquiry page
to be found on website
www.flackwellheathcommunitycentre.org.uk

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grapevine@flackwellheathcommunitycentre.org.uk
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