

Extra Mile Award 2016

It was TFS Chairman Ted Gardner's great pleasure to present the *Extra Mile Award* for 2016 to our own Christine Osment, in recognition of the fact that her tobacconist shop, Branson's, in Camp Road, has become a popular North Camp institution, where you will always find a warm welcome and friendly chat, as well as high-quality products and service.

Christine celebrated an incredible 50 years behind the counter of her shop in 2016 and her knowledge of tobacco and tobacco products is extensive and fascinating. But local residents go to Branson's for far more than smoking paraphernalia, or the extensive range of greeting cards that Christine also stocks. It is the place to go if you want to know what's going on in Farnborough in general and North Camp in particular, and it is one of the reasons for the strong community spirit that gives North Camp its distinctive identity.

A family business, Branson's came to North Camp 95 years ago and has served a number of purposes over the years, including selling sportswear and wool, and running a lending library.



As much as the shop, Christine herself has become something of an institution in North Camp. She founded North Camp Matters Community Association, which grew out of the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, of which Christine is an honorary member; she remains very active in NCMCA's activities. She also organises fundraising concerts for a number of charities and plays an important role in the organisation of the annual British Legion pantomime and the Christmas competition when the Mayor of

Rushmoor judges the best-decorated shop in North Camp. On a more mundane level, Christine maintains the local notice board, making sure that local residents are kept fully informed about their community, and has successfully campaigned for improvements to the pavements and street lights. She is, in addition, a founder member of The Farnborough Society.



Ted, who had never previously visited Branson's, was delighted to make the presentation to Christine and to learn about the history of the business. "Being a non-smoker, it wouldn't normally occur to me to go into a tobacconist," he said, "but this has been absolutely very interesting and informative. I will certainly make a point of visiting again."