

# THE SPEEN & NORTH DEAN *News*



Summer 2017

Issue 69





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**W**elcome! to the summer edition of the Speen & North Dean News, and in true village-style it's been a great season so far, with the Fetes, the Church restoration and Fun Day - and now we're in the exciting throes of the build up to Speen Festival 2017!

There's a great line up this year - you'll find the full programme of events in the centre pages - you can easily book online, and tickets will also be on sale outside the shop on Saturday mornings - 19th and 26th August and 2nd September. Packs of Robin Hood-themed bunting will be available for a small contribution to make up and decorate your houses, and make sure to dig out your fairy lights to light the merry men home from their performances. Buy your tickets early to avoid disappointment!

If you fancy a flutter, why not sign up to the new Wycombe Lotto - tickets are £1, and if you nominate the Pre-School as your chosen cause they will receive 50% of the ticket sales! What a great way to support the Pre-School - and you could win up to £25,000 into the bargain!

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

*Jacqui Laing*



Just as we were going to press we heard the devastating news about Matthew Hitchman - such a lovely young man and a tragic loss.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family. I'm sure as a village we will do everything we can to support them.

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## Next Edition

Copy for the next edition is **due by 1st November** with a planned publication date of late November. Please send photos separately from text, together with captions and a consent form (downloaded from the SNDN website [www.speenbucks.org.uk](http://www.speenbucks.org.uk)) if any of the photos are of children. Please send to [editor@speenbucks.org.uk](mailto:editor@speenbucks.org.uk).

## Welcome Packs

The Good Neighbours scheme was set up many years ago and is now run by Pat Richardson in Speen and Judith Broadley in North Dean. One service is to provide new residents with a Welcome Pack of village information, so if you know of anyone new to the area please call: Pat Richardson (Speen) 01494 488627 or Judith Broadley (North Dean) 01494 563178 [cooljude@btopenworld.com](mailto:cooljude@btopenworld.com)

## Village News

If you are not already signed up to The Village Diary and The Village Messenger, do email [jh@jwhh.co.uk](mailto:jh@jwhh.co.uk) to be put on the mailing lists - they will keep you up to date via email on a monthly basis with all the latest village news and dates for your diary.

EDITOR: Jacqui Laing • ADVERTISING: Tom Dent

COMMITTEE: Gloria Holmes (Chair), Megan Chinn, Nick Wheeler-Robinson, Julie White

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# WHAT'S ON

## *in Speen & North Dean*

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### AUGUST

25th August	Marquee Upping	Speen Playing Field 2pm	Greg Cook 488939
25th August	Village Pub Night	Village Hall 7pm	Cat Cook 488939

### SEPTEMBER

2nd-18th Sept	Speen Festival 2017	Various	Cat Cook 488939
6th September	Garden Group visit to Wormsley	Meet at KWIV car park 1.45pm	Marion Grimsdale 488722
7th September	WI Rural Life in South Africa	Village Hall 7.45pm	Jean Morris 488529
13th September	Men's Philosophical Society	The George, West Wyc 8.30pm	Graham Peart 488327
29th September	Village Pub Night	Village Hall 7pm	Cat Cook 488939

### OCTOBER

5th October	WI A Wildside Walk along The Thames	Village Hall 7.45pm	Jean Morris 488529
7th October	Playing Fields Work Party	Speen Playing Field 9.30am	Claire Morris 488553
11th October	SHH Charity Bridge Afternoon	Upper North Dean Farm 1.20pm	Sally Codling 488506
11th October	Garden Group 'Garden Girls'	Village Hall 7.30pm	Jane Oury 488317
11th October	Men's Philosophical Society	The Whip, Lacey Green 8.30pm	Graham Peart 488327

### NOVEMBER

4th November	Speen Bonfire Night	Speen Playing Fields	Clare Morris 488553
18th November	SHH Christmas Market	Lacey Green Village Hall 11am	Christine Symondson 488654

### DECEMBER

2nd December	Village Hall Christmas Market	Speen Village Hall	Margaret Groves 488180
8th December	Speen Christmas Tree Carols	Speen Playing Field	Clare Morris 488553

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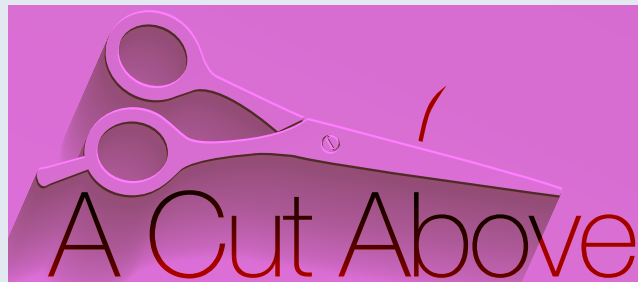


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# SPEENPRE-SCHOOL

*Helen Davies, Chair*

What a busy time the children have at this time of year. We have just finished for the holidays and we are exhausted – the parents particularly! This week the children have had their end of term party with a visit from Active kids providing energetic fun, followed by a wonderful party lunch.

Last week we held our sports day; the children had a lot of fun taking part in their races and thoroughly enjoyed cheering on the parents and grandparents who took part in their own races. We were delighted to have Speen School join us and they even got to join in, with a few special races at the end of the event. The Pre-school children love the older children coming to watch their sports day and we are thankful to Mrs Nayna and the staff for participating. The parents and children then stayed for a delicious ploughman's lunch provided by the Pre-school committee.

We were invited to join Speen School for their annual Speen SchoolFest and join in on a wonderful morning of Super Hero workshops. The children participated in singing, art and craft activities and even got to stay at "big school" for lunch. A thoroughly enjoyable morning for the Pre-school children. We are always delighted when asked to join the school for these activities and I know we will continue our strong links with the school next term and beyond.

Speen fete is another huge day for us on our calendar and this year we embraced the Vintage theme with craft for the children and selling candy striped bags of sweets. It was a glorious day and wonderful to see so many children at our stall. The fete committee work very hard to provide the village with this event and money raised goes straight back into the community. A big thank you to them from us.

Our Forest School site continues to thrive. It is an amazing educational environment that is going from strength to strength. We will be continuing to run twice per week throughout the next term. The Pre-school would not be able to provide such a unique experience for the children without the support of the playing fields committee and we are very grateful.

Fundraising continues throughout the school year. Our biggest fundraising event of the season was the Speen Summer Ball in June. This year the theme was Black and White Masquerade and guests looked amazing in their Viennese-inspired masks. A great night was had by all and a huge thank you to all those who supported the Ball in various ways, from offering prizes in the Auction of Promises to helping the big clear up on Sunday morning. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in Speen and

North Dean for your continued support at all our fundraising events. Pre-school relies heavily on the money raised to continue to provide the children with wonderful facilities.

We are delighted to announce we have been accepted as a beneficiary of Wycombe lotto. This is a new venture for Wycombe Council and well worth our support. Wycombe Lotto is a weekly lottery that directly supports local good causes and community initiatives. Lotteries are a fun and effective way for causes to raise much-needed funds in these difficult times. Tickets are only £1 per week with a chance to win £2500 and 50% of the ticket sales going direct to Pre-school if you select us as the cause. Please go to [www.wycombelotto.co.uk](http://www.wycombelotto.co.uk), select Speen Pre-school and buy your tickets. You do not need to live in Wycombe to enter so please encourage any family or friends to join.

We were very sad to say goodbye to our children moving on to "Big School" and wish them well in their new adventures. We are looking forward to welcoming new children in September, the staff are already planning a range of activities to keep the children engaged. We still have spaces available in our sessions for children from 2-5 years old and any prospective parents can arrange a visit at any time during term time. Over the summer to obtain a prospectus please contact Helen Davies on 01494 488847 or email [office@speenpreschool.org.uk](mailto:office@speenpreschool.org.uk).

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# SPEEN SCHOOL & PTA

Alex Allen, PTA Chair

Another school year has come to an end and the holidays have begun. We have said sad farewells to our Year 2 children and wish them well at their new schools in September.

The Summer term was a busy time for children and parents alike. Princes Risborough Upper School hosted several multi-school sports tournaments when children from all year groups got to compete against other local schools and develop their sports skills. Year 2 children also took part in the Gym and Dance Festival in July performing 2 different routines on stage to a large audience. A selection of children also had the opportunity to take part in the annual Golden Welly competition at Bledlow Ridge school, coming 2nd against several other local schools.

June is usually our busiest month, the school invited Dads to visit for a celebration of Father's Day with a surprise mission this year to make kites! June also marks Speen Schoolfest. We are lucky to have so many talented parents at school who took the lead in organising this arts festival and running sessions over the 3 days welcoming children from Speen School, Speen Pre-School and St John's. This year's theme was Everyday Super Heroes and all the children joined the Superhero Academy practising songs and dances, writing poetry and decorating their own Superhero T-Shirts. Many thanks to all who made the event happen including the many helpers from the village and the continued support of Speen Festival.

On the Saturday evening after Speenfest the marquee was transformed into a Black & White Masquerade Ball! A huge thanks to the hardworking ball committee and to all who made generous pledges, sponsorship and to all those with successful winning bids on our Auction, this resulted in over £6000 being raised for the school and Pre-School.

Speen School Years 1 and 2 put on a wonderful Country Dancing display at Speen Fete and the PTA ran the popular Tombola stall again. It was another sunny and enjoyable afternoon.

On the last Saturday of term the PTA hosted a camp over in the school field for all the Year 2 leavers. The children enjoyed a BBQ tea and created flags to hang from their tents. Later in the evening it was time for the camp fire with some



singing and marshmallow toasting. A late night and lots of adventures created some wonderful memories for the children as they move on from Speen school.

Moving into the next term the governors are excited to share the news of offering regular planned Forest School sessions jointly with Speen Pre-School for the new Autumn Term, either held within the school's stunning grounds or at Ridgley's Field which is a designated village

amenity. This will give us scope to expand the concept of outdoor learning and work alongside pre-trained staff. Further, Mrs Hayman will be embarking on an accredited Forest School training course at the beginning of next term, which will equip her with the expertise to run such initiatives and will be a further asset to the School.

We are proud to be able to offer this unique opportunity to learn through practical activities set in an exhilarating outdoor environment totally removed from the traditional classroom setting. The experience provides all children with the opportunity to explore the outdoors, work together and build self-esteem, to problem solve and engage physically and socially. Further specifics about activities will be announced in the new term.

Governors are also delighted to share the latest assessment results for 2017 which for Key Stage 1 puts us in the top 10% overall within Buckinghamshire when combining results for reading, writing and maths. We are very proud of our teaching staff and congratulate the children on their wonderful achievements as they move on to the next exciting chapter of their education.

Speen School are hoping to offer a subsidised Parenting Course in the Autumn Term, something we know other Schools run and many parents welcome, particularly at the beginning of their children's journey through education. We hope that our parents would be interested in participating in such a course.

We have places available in reception class beginning this September. If you know of a friend, neighbour or relative in the surrounding area who may be undecided about their child's infant school place, please get in touch.

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# SPEENPLAYING FIELDS

Clare Morris, Chair

## ★★★ Monthly Draw 2017 – 2018 ★★★

### The time has come to purchase or renew your codes for the Monthly Playing Field Draw.

The Draw is the main fundraiser for the Playing Field, raising over 50% of Playing Field Income. All the money raised is ploughed back into the Speen community and is used to maintain both Speen Playing Field and Ridgley's Field - a cost of about £5,000 per year. The money is used to pay for grass cutting, insurance, maintenance of the pavilion and play equipment on the field and in the bike park. Events such as the recent Village Fete, Funday and Festival would not be able to happen without maintained Playing Fields being available for the whole community to use.

There is still time to participate in the draw that will begin in September. Contributions are made in units of £5, for which you get a code entry into the draw. Draws take place on a monthly basis running from 31st August 2017 to 31st July 2018. The first prize is £30, there are two second prizes of £20, three third prizes of £10 and two prizes of £5. In addition, two £50 prizes are drawn at Christmas and on Fun Day. A list of this year's Draw Winners can be found on the village website.

Thank you to all those who support us year in and year out and for the team of draw sellers, under the leadership of Cristina Delgado, who do such a fantastic job. If you haven't had your form email [cristinadelgado@btinternet.com](mailto:cristinadelgado@btinternet.com).

## DOGS & CHILDREN MATTER

Tony Bobroff, on behalf of The PlayingFields

As a dog owner and grandparent, I know how much these little people, both two and four legged, have to share. There are two children's play areas in the village where dog walking is restricted.

The main Playing Field is a totally dog free area. Our children play without fear of dogs wishing to join in or of stepping in dog mess, which is not only disgusting to clear up but Toxocariasis is also very dangerous, particularly to young children. For further scary info please Google.

So for the main field the rules are clear for good reason and we shall be adding signage to make it even clearer.

The second children's play area is Ridgley's Field which includes the Pre-School forest play area. This land was bequeathed to the Village, specifically as children's play space. Dog walkers may walk across this area only provided their dogs are on leads and they never leave mess in the field. Unfortunately this is no longer respected. Dogs are let off their leads, sometimes several at a time, to exercise themselves without effort or hope of finding their excrement. I have many times picked up other people's dog muck left in Ridgley's.

In addition to the danger of mixing dog faeces and children, we have recently had two serious incidents in Ridgley's Field. Villagers walking through Ridgley's have so feared for the safety of their children / grandchildren that they had to place themselves between jumping

dogs baring teeth and their charges. This was traumatic for these children and could leave them with a lasting fear; furthermore it is an accident waiting to happen with unthinkable consequences.

The obvious conclusion is that Dan Ridgeley's Field is either for dogs to run loose or a children's play area but not both. The present compromise can only work if people respect each other.

We discussed banning dogs altogether from Ridgley's but we would prefer to try to make the present arrangement work. So this is a very specific article from one dog lover to others. We have a duty to behave responsibly,

- To keep our dogs under control, not allowing them to jump up.
- To keep our dogs on leads where requested.
- To clear as we go.
- Not to leave poo bags hanging as tree décor.
- To take our poo bags home or if absolutely necessary, in extremis, to dump in bins, which are not cleared by the council but by us, Yuck !!
- To pick up or at least clear well away from open areas where others tread

Some dog owners have become very lax, giving us all a bad name and putting our children and grandchildren at risk. We all have a duty of care to control our dogs.



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*Lesley Thorn-Davis, Chair Speen Fete*

I am writing this report following on from the Vintage themed Fete on Saturday 8th July. I joined the Fete as Chair in January following Amanda Dobbs stepping down after 10 years of running the Fete, so some pretty big shoes to fill I think you will agree!

The sun shone, the crowds came and the field was filled with a mass of colour and activity. We were fortunate to be entertained by the wonderful Polka Dots, kindly sponsored by Tudor Travel, Martin Hart's Jazz Band who kept everyone's feet tapping away, Katy Kartwheel, a brilliant circus performer who had the children hula-hooping in the main arena, Natalie Jane Dance School who all looked fabulous in their bright pink outfits and, of course, the Fete would not be complete without the delightful performance of the Speen School children and their country dancing.

If that wasn't enough we had all of the traditional side attractions: Punch & Judy, a vintage Fire Engine, Bar and BBQ. This year, Darvills Hill Farm kindly sponsored the skittles and a hamper of pork was presented to the winner. Two very generous prizes were donated by Princes Risborough Golf Club which could be won on the golf game. In the marquee we had a display of the work of local artists, Speen Festival Promotions and tea and cake served by the lovely ladies of the WI dressed up in vintage 1940's costume. To cool down we had the delicious ice-cream from Beechdean, who are always extremely generous in their support for the Village and our Fete. I hope you managed to get to the competition tent where all of the colouring competitions were displayed, kindly sponsored by Speen Stores, and all of the other competitions – miniature garden, flowers in a jar, 6 decorated cupcakes, collage creation and a design your own Lego model. Prizes of a family swim were given by Princes Risborough Pool. I hope there was something for everyone to enjoy.

One of the highlights of my day was seeing Mr Brownridge blowing up balloons for Guess the Balloons in the Mini

competition. I don't think any of us had thought about how many we might need, the heat, or how easy it was to lose count! The Mini, as lent by Mrs Ami Brownridge, was greatly admired.

The finances are still being dealt with as I type, however early indications are that we have made an excellent sum to be distributed back into the various Village organisations including Speen School, Pre-School, Village Hall and Girl Guides. Our main distribution of funds this year will go to Speen Playing Fields who are working very hard to raise money in order to improve the Children's Play area.

None of this would happen without the continued generosity of local businesses and Villagers who gave their time and assistance on Saturday and to all those who attended on the day. So a very big thank you to everyone involved and we look forward to next year!

### *Speen Fete Recruitment*

William Summers has been a key member of Speen Fete Committee for the past 10 years and he has decided that it is now time to pass the job of logistics and equipment organisation on to another member of the Village. We will very much miss having William on board as he has been an essential member of the Fete Team. On behalf of Team, thank you William for all of your dedication and hard work.

If you would like to get involved with the Speen Fete Team please do contact me. All you need to bring to the role is some enthusiasm, organisational skills and a bit of muscle power! I am happy to chat through what this role involves and answer any questions you may have. We meet once a month starting in January to bat around some ideas (this usually involves a glass or two of wine), so it is a great way to get to know others in the Village. We have a very good Team: there are currently 12 of us and everyone has a role to play.







## *Congratulations to the Competition Winners:*

- **Balloons in a mini :** Mr McPherson
- **Skittles Winner:** Roger Anderson
- **Fancy Dress Winner:** Lucy Morris
- **Bake & Decorate 6 fairy cakes:** Harry Davies
- **Miniature garden in a tray:** Daisy Regan
- **Fairytale collage:** Lucy Morris
- **Flower arrangement in a jam jar:** Eva McPherson
- **Best Lego model:** Harry Sullivan
- **Colouring Competition 4-7:** Amelie Allan
- **Colouring Competition 8-11:** Ella Price

- **Best Village display competition**
- 1st prize: The Brookes-Ushers
- 2nd prize: The Buxtons
- 3rd prize: John Radford
- Sponsors choice: The VW

- **Best village bunting display**
- 1st prize: The Buxtons
- 2nd prize: The Forkgens
- 3rd prize: Henry Lane



Some Fancy Dress entrants with their judge The Right Honourable David Lidington CBE MP



# WELCOME TO CHAPEL + HALL AT SPEEN CHURCH

## *Project Restoration – Speen Church Hall Restored!*

June 25th. An amazing day. The Grand Opening Service and Ceremony brought the community together for an afternoon of celebration to mark the completion and commissioning of the new Chapel Hall. Thanks were extended to the teams who worked tirelessly to ensure the successful build. The ribbon was cut by the Church's youngest member, Bethany, assisted by Doris, one of our oldest members.

Afternoon tea and Prosecco was preceded by the inaugural performance of Speen Young Violinists. A live jazzy set by bassist Hugo Piper and drummer Hugh Laughton set the tone for a truly memorable day.

The modern facilities now provide for a wide range of activities in versatile and comfortable surroundings. Regular church activities are held in the hall, as well as seasonal and one-off events.

We are delighted to welcome Tiddlers and Toddlers, the Speen and North Dean playgroup from September. Please contact Rachael McComish for details (see below). Also opening in September is the Chapel Hill Kitchen – which will be serving coffee, cake and light lunches on Thursdays 9am-3pm. Contact Kate Vale for more information on this exciting addition to village life.

The build was completed in four months and within budget. Thank you, God! Some debt remains to be repaid, but with the generosity of the village and those within the wider community, as well as the church attendees, we are confident this will be paid off in the next few years.

If you would like to contribute in any way to the work of Chapel Hall, please contact Sandy Mitcheson.



Rev Heather McIntyre: revhmcintyre@gmail.com

Rachael McComish: speennorthdeantoddlers@gmail.com

Kate Vale: chapelhillkitchen@outlook.com

Sandy Mitcheson: smitcheson@btconnect.com Tel. 488875



## LACEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

*Roger Cratt & Philip Suter, Speen representatives on Lacey Green Parish Council*

### *Speen Playing Fields*

Under recent General Powers of Competence the Parish Council has been given the ability to contribute to local community projects. As such, it was decided that it would be more beneficial to the Playing Fields to have funds for the play equipment.

Instead of the playground area at the tennis court end being transferred to the Parish Council under a leasehold arrangement, the playground would remain under the full control of the Playing Fields Committee.

The Parish Council has agreed to provide a generous grant of £20,000 for equipment in the playground area.

### *Speed Watch / Purchase of MVAS*

The Parish Council has commissioned and paid for the Local Area Technician to visit the Parish and agree the most appropriate locations for the positioning of the Mobile Vehicle Activation Signs (MVAS).

Funds are now available to purchase an MVAS for use in both Speen & Lacey Green and this will go ahead once we have received the agreed sitings.

The Parish Council is indebted to the volunteers who have been involved to date working with PC Turnham on various speed watch sessions.

### *New benches in Speen*

The benches located opposite Speen Stores and on the corner of Abbotswood have been replaced. The Parish Council has opted for a hard-wearing material that should not need any costly maintenance unlike the benches that were previously located there.



The millennium bench had become a 'health and safety' concern and has been removed and a replacement like the other two benches should be installed in the autumn. It will have a plaque commemorating the millennium.

### *Speen Festival 2017*

Once again the Parish Council has provided a grant towards this year's Festival.



# Horses, Hounds & Heroes 2017 Special

**An insight to a fantastic open day!**



Our Horses, Hounds and Heroes event was a massive success and the team were overwhelmed with the incredible support we received from over 2,000 visitors. Our Main Arena was a hive of activity which included demonstrations from The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch, Defence Animal Centre Canine Squadron as well as displays from our very own residents including Teddy, Gabriel, Jenga and Eve.

We had a very special retirement Ceremony for Achilles, The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment's Drum Horse who had his ceremonial drums removed for the very last time.

We also held our, now annual, Hobby Horse Gymkhana where 5 teams entered what was an energetic relay race that had to be ridden on a hobby horse. Competitors included the Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue, a local team called 'Rainbow Rock' along with a couple of teams from Speen School and Speen Pre-school. The final was between Speen School and Rainbow Rock, the tension in the air was clear but the competitive spirit came out in the Speen School girls as they flew through the

relay race finishing in record timings and winning their trophies of The Horse Trust Wooden Horse Shoes. They guaranteed to be back next year to defend their title!

We would like to take the time to thank all our exhibitors for their fabulous stalls and the displays that took place throughout the day along with our programme and event sponsors.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all our amazing volunteers including the Speen Ladies V.V.I. who ran our tea room in Sefton's Barn and everyone who mucked in and worked hard to make sure everyone had a lovely time.

Horses, Hounds and Heroes is our major annual event and hugely important to us so that we can demonstrate how we care for our residents but it would not be possible without you.

On behalf of everyone here at The Horse Trust, thank you for all your generous support, and we hope you had an enjoyable day. Remember to keep us in mind for next year; keep an eye on our events page to see what we are up to next!

## Inca Dove and Phoenix Meet the Public for the First Time!



Photography courtesy of Claire Twigg

**Many of you may recognise this little mare Inca Dove and her beloved foal Phoenix.**

From a starving, neglected, pregnant little mare, abandoned, riddled with every type of worm imaginable and covered in fleas to this picture of perfect family bliss! Inca Dove's journey may have started in truly terrible circumstances but look at her now! A very proud (and healthy) mum of beautiful filly foal Phoenix, because everyone pony is worth it!

This stunning girl was born to mum Inca Dove this spring and surprised us all by arriving not only fit and well, but also being a bit of a whopper! Inca had arrived to us heavily pregnant but severely underweight. It was such a massive relief when Inca produced a healthy filly foal and what a beauty she is!

Both little ponies were not at all flustered by the crowds of adoring supporters that turned out to meet them at Horses, Hounds and Heroes on Sunday 16th July. They spent all day on the yard for the very first time then strutted their stuff in the Parade of horses before heading back to their paddock for a bit of down time.

For more ways to support our work in helping horses like Inca Dove and Phoenix, or for more information on their road to recovery please visit our website [www.horsetrust.org.uk](http://www.horsetrust.org.uk)

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## Saturday 2nd September

**Speen Heritage Walk** 2pm  
A guided walk around Speen Heritage Trail with commentary about the history of buildings and features of our village.

Village Hall ..... Free Admission

**Survival Night** 4pm  
Speen woods will host an overnight challenge that only a few will achieve - you know who you are.

Destination Unknown ..... £5

**Open Mic Sessions** 6pm  
Whatever your age, if you want to share your talent with the community - be it music or a song; comedy or a recital; or even an interpretive dance, then this is the event for you.

Speen Chapel ..... Performers: Free • Audience: £5

## Sunday 3rd September

**Yoga on the Playing Fields** 9am-10am  
Start your Sunday off with an outdoor yoga session with Sally Roper. Please bring your own mat. No experience necessary.

Playing Field ..... Free Admission  
but register an interest online

**Ukelele Workshop** 2pm & 2.30pm  
Two half hour workshops hosted by Little Strummers. All ages welcome. Instruments supplied. No experience necessary.

Village Hall ..... Free Admission  
but please reserve a space online

**Festival Launch Party** 3pm  
Come and see what Speen Festival 2017 has in store and the Box office will be open to make sure you don't miss out.

Playing Fields/Marquee ..... Free Admission

## Tuesday 5th September

**Knitting Know How** 10.30am  
Drop in knitting workshop for all ages (over 5). Materials supplied - come away with a completed or started project!

Village Hall ..... £3 (pay on the day)

**Words & Music** 7pm  
'The Morning Turned as Dark as Judgment Day'. Buckinghamshire crime and society through the ages presented by Anne and David Worlock, with musical interludes. Cheese and wine (cash bar) in the interval. Proceeds to be donated to Agape.

Speen Chapel ..... £10

## Saturday 9th September

**Drawing Workshop 1** 10am-12noon  
Using a variety of drawing materials in experimental ways, this workshop will be a collaborative event which will include making large, expressive drawings using the whole arm and body.

Speen Chapel ..... £10

**Drawing Workshop 2** 2pm-4pm  
This workshop will be about experimental drawing with simple materials in order to have a basic experience of 'sculpture'. An opportunity to share ideas and extend the imagination.

Speen Chapel ..... £10

## Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th September

**Speen Photography Group**  
**Photographic Exhibition** 12noon-2pm  
A collection of works by members of the Speen Photography Group taken from projects over the past 8 years.

Village Hall ..... £1 entry fee

## Sunday 10th September

**Pop-Up Pub on the Playing Fields** 11am  
We've got food, drink and some fun all sorted so don't think about cooking - come and see what's on offer.

Playing Fields/Marquee ..... Free Admission

**Dementia Café** 1pm  
Join local Business Ashridge Home Care for a friendly and informal afternoon tea and learn how we can all help to make a difference by improving our understanding of dementia.

Speen Chapel ..... Free admission

**Bike Park Challenge** 2pm  
An exciting and fun afternoon of bike trials and mobility skills to test children and teenagers, with bike mechanics on hand. Includes refreshments and BBQ.

Ridgley's Field ..... £4

## Monday 11th September

**Young Scientists Matter** 5pm  
Your chance to question an expert panel on everything scientific and find out some answers to important challenges facing our world. Maybe you can suggest some answers of your own? 12+.

Festival Marquee ..... Free admission

**Science Matters** 7.30pm  
Join the panel to debate important scientific issues. The themes this year will include Science and Sustainability, Space and Security. So come along with your questions, concerns and ideas.

Festival Marquee ..... Adults: £5 • Students: £2

## Tuesday 12th September

**Reflections on a Chiltern Woodland** 8pm  
A Close Up Look At Speen's Woodland Wildlife. Local wildlife photographer Peter Symonds takes a close up look at some of the stunning wildlife in our local woods and gardens.

Speen Chapel ..... £5

## Wednesday 13th September

**Jazz Concert** 8pm  
Celebrate the works of Jimmy Van Heuson and his contribution to the 'Great American Song Book' with vocalist Lynn Garner and the Martin Hart Jazz Quintet featuring Alan Grahame on vibraphone, Mike Wills on saxophone and Ken McCarthy on keyboards.

Marquee ..... £12

# PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

**Thursday 7th September**  
7.30pm

**Friday 8th September**  
7.30pm

**Saturday 9th September**  
2pm and 7.30pm

Times are tough for the (surprisingly musical) villager peasants under the tyrannical rule of the Sheriff of Speen and his wife's expensive tastes. Luckily a small group of outlaws have united to fight against this villaia.

With a script by our own Louise Wilson, and music by James Woodhall, this specially written upbeat adaptation is sure to bring life and laughter to the English legend.

**Festival Marquee**  
Adults: £12 • Under 16s: £8

ROBIN HOOD

## Thursday 14th September

**Questions Worth Asking** 8pm  
Join an evening of fun, eye-opening storytelling that will also include panel discussions and questions from the floor.

Festival Marquee ..... Adults: £5 • Under 16s: £2

## Friday 15th September

**Vintage Cinema** from 7.15pm  
The Italian Job comes to Speen. Enjoy this classic film at our pop-up cinema brought to you by the Chiltern Vintage Cinema and their special beanbags. VIP parking for Minis. Price includes Italian food.

Festival Marquee ..... £15

## Saturday 16th September

**Johnny & the Raindrops** 10.30am  
Gigs for Cool Kids - Come and join us for a morning of lively, Robin Hood-themed colourful songs - fun for all the family.

Festival Marquee ..... Adults: free • 2-10 year olds: £5

**Dog Show** 1pm  
Does your dog have the Waggiest Tail or the Best Trick? Junior and experienced handlers are welcome to enter our fun classes.

Ridgley's Field ..... £2 per class entry • Spectators free

**Comedy Night** 7pm  
Local comedian and rising fringe festival star Elliot Wengler has brought together some of the finest acts on the circuit for an unmissable comedy show. Price includes fish & chips.

Festival Marquee ..... £15

## Sunday 17th September

**Yoga on the Playing Fields** 9am - 10am  
Start your Sunday off with an outdoor yoga session with Sally Roper. Please bring your own mat. No experience necessary.

Playing Field ..... Free Admission  
but register an interest online

**Picnic on the Playing Fields** 2pm  
Bring your own picnic from 2pm or enjoy the baked delights of the WI 3-4.30pm and enjoy live music from Lucina Pearson, Rachel Horton-Kitchlew, James Beau Barclay and Emily Williams.

Playing Field ..... Free Admission

# The ROBIN HOOD Bar

in the Village Hall

## NEXT PUB NIGHT

will be held in  
the village hall  
on

Friday  
29th August

## SPEEN'S FIRST FAMILY FUN DOG SHOW

### CLASSES:

Handsomest dog • Prettiest bitch  
Loveliest veteran • Cutest puppy  
Waggiest tail • Best trick • Musical Sits  
Judges' favourite • Best in show  
see entry form on the website

## OPEN MIC SESSIONS

Open Call for Performers  
to kick off the Festival  
at the Open Mic Sessions  
on Saturday  
2nd September

## TURNING SPEEN INTO SHERWOOD FOREST

It's that time in Festival calendar when we ask you to get your creative juices flowing and decorate your house, garden, hedge or road for Festival Fortnight. The theme this year is Robin Hood – Sheriff of Nottingham, rich evil merchants, downtrodden peasants, Little John, Will Scarlett, Maid Marion, bows and arrows, Friar Tuck - and that's just a sample of what could sprout from the hedgerows.

### FESTIVAL BUNTING

The festival bunting will continue the theme in the shape of shields and will be available for a small contribution, on sale on Saturdays outside the shop.

### FAIRY LIGHTS

To make the village even more festive you could get out your fairy lights and illuminate festival goers as they wend their way home at night through Sherwood-Speen.

## THE FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE

will be selling tickets and  
bunting to decorate your house  
outside the shop on  
Saturday mornings on the  
19th & 26th August  
and 2nd September

## COMEDY NIGHT:

Hosted by Elliot Wengler,  
featuring:  
Adele Cliff  
Andy Gleeks  
Chris Norton Walker  
Katie Pritchard  
and Sindhu Vee

## SCIENCE MATTERS

will feature

**Professor Ed Lester, Uni of Nottingham:**  
Exciting developments at the interface  
of chemistry and engineering, such as solar  
energy, batteries and wearable tech.  
**Ali Stickings, RUSI:** Space security and  
UK resilience to external threats.

**Professor Barry Stickings:**  
Sustainability and the role of chemical  
industry to promote global sustainable  
development

## NEED TO CONTACT US?

If you want to help out, perform at  
Open Mic, submit a question for  
Science Matters or have a query for  
an event organiser please contact  
us at [admin@speenfestival.org](mailto:admin@speenfestival.org)  
or for ticket enquiries  
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# SPEENFUN DAY

Matt Davies



# SPEENFUN DAY

Matt Davies

## *Speen Funday once again delivered the goods in 2017.*

An inspired theme - Speen Ninja Olympic Trials (S.N.O.T. games) - enabled the creative juices of the team to really flow unabated. A selection of games were picked that mingled the best elements of old favourites with a splattering of new ideas, all topped off with the annual highlight of the Kiddie Kurling Kup.

The White Team emerged victorious, edging what was the tightest contest for many years by barely a tissue's width. Congratulations to Captain Jez Bowen and his Abbotswood / Coleheath team for their thoroughly deserved triumph, engineered over just 13 years of patient planning! What a fine sunny day on which to collect such a prize.

Kiddie Kurling Honours were shared between two worthy champions - well done Annabel and Charlie! Mention also for Jess Cook, who set a self propelled distance record as if sneezed down the field by Fungus the Bogeyman himself.

Enormous thanks must go, as ever, to the squad of game designers, BBQ chefs, bar staff, spotters, quartermasters, bucket shakers and sprout procurers. Our 2017 young master of ceremonies, Jem, also did a passable job, despite his tender years. Sincere thanks too to our invigilator-in-chief, Jeff - eagle eyes in a magpie shirt.

Lastly, an open invitation. To the casual observer or uninitiated, Funday gives the impression that it's thrown together at the last minute, having been hastily written up on the back of a post-it note. Nothing could be further from the truth, it's an intricately engineered affair, taking months of painstaking planning and people power. If you think you have what it takes to join the team; an elusive and rare blend of creative genius, practical skills and a penchant for catapulting vegetables, then please get in touch - fresh ideas always welcome.

Until next year!

# SPEEN & NORTH DEAN PLAYGROUP

Rachael McComish, Playgroup Leader

Our small, friendly playgroup continued to meet on a Tuesday morning this beautiful summer term in the picturesque North Dean Village Hall. The grown-ups enjoyed catching up over a cuppa whilst the tiddlers and toddlers zoomed around in their ride-on cars, bounced on the trampoline, caused chaos with the paint and enjoyed a number of healthy (and occasionally not-so-healthy) snacks.

Recent years have proved tough for a little rural group like ours to keep going – run largely on the generosity of parents setting up, bringing snacks, entertaining the little ones and, most importantly, turning up!

We're delighted to announce that come September we're moving home to the beautifully renovated Chapel Hall at Speen Church, in the hope of bringing new people to the group and continuing its presence across our villages in the years to come. We're grateful to Rev. Heather and her volunteers for this wonderful opportunity, not only to keep a 20-year old playgroup in existence, but to offer a new event for Speen in this fantastic new community space. We bid a very fond farewell to North Dean Village Hall, and thank them for their support in keeping our playgroup in a beautiful home all these years.

We'd love to encourage anyone to come and join us, be you a mother, father, grandparent or carer. It's a wonderful and very relaxed setting where the children have access to play together with a wide range of toys and undertake crafts and messy play, building their confidence, independence and communication skills.

If you'd like to know more about joining us on Tuesday mornings during term times, get in touch at [spennorthdeantoddlers@gmail.com](mailto:spennorthdeantoddlers@gmail.com). We hope to see you in September.





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Have you heard about microfibers and the problems they are causing to our oceans and marine life? Neither had most WI members, until it became a topic of debate at the National Annual Meeting last month.

These minute fibres are removed from man-made fabrics every time we wash them and are so small that they pass through the filters in washing machines and the water treatment plants. Due to their small size they are readily ingested by aquatic life and then enter the food chain and concentrate toxins in the bodies of larger fish and other animals - and eventually us!.

So what can be done? The WI will campaign for better filtration systems to be developed. But we can all also do our bit by thinking about our washing. Polyester cotton sheds only 20% of the fibres shed by acrylics; small and mighty detergents cause more shedding than more gentle ones; washing less frequently would obviously reduce the numbers.

Already action is being taken against other plastic waste such as microbeads and plastic containers. But it is ironic that turning plastic bottles into fleece material is now causing a potentially more damaging attack on our marine environment.

Closer to home Speen WI continues to enjoy their social life with a recent Garden Party on a brilliant summer's day and a drinks and nibbles evening in August. Our excellent speakers continue to educate and entertain us and we are



looking forward to finding out about ways of life in Rural South Africa and the wildlife along the Thames valley over the coming months.

As usual we provide tea and cakes at the fete and entered into the vintage theme as we dressed in pinnies and head scarves appropriate to the forties. We are also organising similar refreshments at Picnic in the Park at the festival in September.

If you want to find out more about WI please do contact us or better still pop along to a meeting, on the first Thursday of each month, meet us and enjoy a very sociable evening. Details are always in the magazine and posters on the village notice boards. We look forward to welcoming all the ladies of both villages.

*Tel: 488529 • [speenwi@gmail.com](mailto:speenwi@gmail.com)*





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# ALLIED HEALTHCARE

**A**s a population we are getting older and many of us will be faced with finding nursing or personal care for an elderly relative or planning our own future care if we become incapacitated. Bucks, residents are increasingly making a choice, where possible, of living in their own homes for as long as possible and the local branch of Allied Healthcare is aiming to make this option easier.

The local branch of Allied Healthcare has been operating for over 27 years, based just outside of High Wycombe, has a proven track record of providing domiciliary care in the community.

Increasingly there are fewer hospital beds and long term care homes that are accessible to those needing help, support and care, and most people, if given the choice, would prefer to be treated at home with their own possessions around them. We can offer a wide variety of Care calls from 15 minute pop-in call, once a day to multiple calls or indeed a full time Live In Care.

The offices of Allied Healthcare at High Wycombe are able to help with assessing your needs and advising on all aspects of your care. Before care starts you would be visited by our assessor to ensure that a comprehensive care plan was written and tailor made to suit the needs of the client. This can be for a basic care package to a more specialized and complex packages in the case of a serious illness. We will help you to consider whether you need a fulltime carer, perhaps a special bed or other equipment, or maybe additional carers at certain times of the day to help with lifting or turning. If needed you would have the advice of the 'In House' Trainer to advise on specialist Moving and Handling issues. Allied is willing to go the extra mile to provide the highest standards of care. They try to ensure clients build a relationship with a small team of carers rather than having a constantly changing set of faces. They recommend the use of a Keysafe which ensures a carer, can always gain access to a client's house to provide the care and raise the alarm if needed.

All of the Care workers are trained to the highest standard as required by our regulators, CQC and our stringent internal audit team. Many of our workers have training and expertise in specialist areas but if we needed to we would provide training to meet a specific need of a client.

**If you would like more information about Allied and the services we offer then call 01494 488040, and we can meet with you for a no obligation visit or provide you with details and costings of our services.**

## Work for Allied Healthcare

We always have a need for additional employees to support the services we offer. If you are interested or know of a friend who is interested in joining us as an employee we offer an attractive package. We provide care across the High Wycombe and surrounding areas.

## Care & support in the comfort of your own home

**Do you or a relative require care or support to live your life the way you choose? If so, Allied Healthcare can help. We have been offering an excellent dependable service in the Buckinghamshire area for over 27 years.**

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**All about you**

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If you are interested in becoming a Carer or working with Allied Healthcare then please call the numbers above for more information and an application pack. Allied Healthcare is an equal opportunities employer and is regulated by the CQC. Allied Healthcare is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, adults and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.







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# PASSIONATE PURSUITS

## *What We Love Doing*

### *Amy Entwistle*

I started ballet in Great Missenden when I was three years old with three other of my friends from the village.

I have always enjoyed it, mainly because it is so challenging and I love the amount of concentration and technique that can go into one small and simple looking movement.

What makes a good ballet dancer is lots of strength, flexibility, attention to detail and lots of practice!



### *Kieran Cranley*

I've been passionate about horses since the age of four, when I persuaded my parents to let me have riding lessons. There's a lot to learn, and I've also had instruction at Pony Club.

Now I have my own horse, Ollie. I ride him regularly, especially at weekends and during school holidays, and do competitions - jumping and dressage. Ollie is a member of our family, and I love him.

Horses are very individual, and you have to get to know their personality and treat them well. I like galloping and jumping best, but I also have to do my bit mucking out and clearing up the poo!

### *Ro Myers*

I've been playing football since I was 4 years old, at various clubs such as Manchester United SS Dubai, JLF, Bucks PDC. Currently I play for Wycombe Wanderers Elite Academy, Risborough Rangers and for my school. I love it. You need a love for the game, and overall fitness, which is why I also swim for Wycombe. You need the will to practise along with other sport attributes to be a good player.

I support Liverpool men and Man City ladies - I've led them out for cup match (they won!). I think supporting a team gives you a passion and helps you want to get better. Football is my favourite sport to play - you win together and lose together, so it makes the experience 10 times better with your team.







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# WILDLIFEWATCH

Peter Symonds

## Summer 2017

In my own garden a final fifth brood of 6 Mallard ducklings hatched on 16th July. This was a second brood from one of the regular females that lost her first brood, having made the mistake of leaving the relative safety of our garden. That now makes a total of 47 ducklings that have hatched or been raised in our garden this year. At least 14 have flown, six were taken by a fox but the fate of others that left the garden is not known.

The local Roe deer have bred again with single young and twins being reported. However the small local population remains vulnerable to disturbance and road accidents. I have recently learned that three Roe deer were killed just outside the village in Hampden Road, adjacent to College Plantation in one weekend last November in two separate car accidents. It is highly likely that this was a female with two of her offspring, which represents a significant part of the local population. I suspect that the single animal that escaped the first accident stayed in the locality being uncertain as to what to do. It is likely that any car involved in a collision with these large deer will have been severely damaged so be mindful of the presence of these animals when driving through woodland. In order to help the deer sense cars at night we may try installing some reflector posts along the woodland. Numerous residents enjoy sightings of these animals. Jacqui Barre sent me good photographs of a young buck Roe deer in a meadow near to her house and a Broad Bodied Chaser dragonfly.

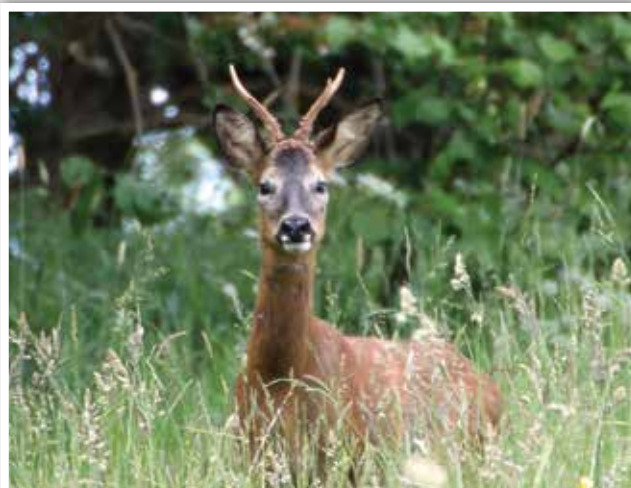
Another creature which nearly came to grief was a local Tawny Owl. I received a call at about 7.15am one morning from a perplexed villager to say she had a Tawny Owl in the lounge of her cottage, opposite the pub. The bird

had entered down the chimney but could not escape. Fortunately I was able to net the bird and release it successfully.

An interesting record from last year was of a large bird of prey with a white head, reported by Paula Cox, with a distant photograph. This bird defied identification but I think I may have solved the mystery. Whilst doing some photography locally recently a Buzzard with a white head landed nearby. Buzzards can be seen with a variety of colour phases with birds ranging from very dark brown through to very pale colours but this was a brown bird with a largely white head which is an unusual combination.

I have received several reports of Hares around the village, not only from their traditional haunts over towards the Home of Rest for Horses but also three were reported from the Monkton/Spring Coppice area. Also in that area it was nice recently to see a couple of Yellowhammers, a bird that is not as common as it used to be. Other records include various reports of Ravens heard or seen, regular sightings of up to 5 Stock Doves and up to 8 Jackdaws in our back garden, with two Herons flying over in April. Great Spotted Woodpeckers and local Nuthatches have brought their offspring to feed in the garden. Wrens did well in our garden, despite our extensive building works with two nests producing four or five young each. Both nests were built in nesting pouches bought from garden centres that can readily be fixed under a porch or canopy to provide a safe site.

Please let me have any interesting local wildlife records.  
Tel: 01494 488016 • [psymonds590@gmail.com](mailto:psymonds590@gmail.com) (new email)



Photographs by Jacqui Barre



# SPEEN HERITAGE GROUP

Clive Rainbow

*Corporal John Rixon was the last of the men from Speen to be killed during WW1. He was one of 13 children born to Eli and Rose Rixon; all of them were born in the family home, Fir View Cottage. John's youngest brother, also named Eli, was the father of Betty Eckle and the grandfather of Amanda Dobbs; they are the only relatives of our 10 WW1 casualties still living in Speen. Amanda, in fact, lives in Fir View Cottage. David Eckle has a superb collection of Ox & Bucks memorabilia and has been very helpful in our research. I recently sent them this report:*

A week ago I went to the Centre for Bucks Studies in Aylesbury and checked John Rixon's entries in the Casualty Books for the 1/1st Bucks Battalion. "Casualty" in WW1 Army parlance is what the RAF, equally quaintly, calls "Occurrences" – the books record significant events in a soldier's career. These entries were made as soon as a written notification arrived at the Regimental HQ in England; sometimes, when the Battalion in France was on the move or engaged in action, some pieces of paper were lost or, more commonly, arrived late – so the entries in the books are seldom in chronological order.

It soon became clear that the Battalion considered John Rixon to be a very good soldier. He was promoted to Corporal early on and, at the time of his death, was being prepared for promotion to Sergeant.

I could not find out exactly when he joined up (most WW1 service records were destroyed in the Blitz) but his personal number – 3122 – indicates that he must have volunteered soon after the start of WW1, which was 4 Aug 1914. He was then 21 years old. John might have held back until the harvest was in. By then, the Army's training capacity had been overwhelmed by volunteers and thousands of men had to wait until the system could cope; I think he might not have been accepted into Basic Training with the 1/1st Bucks Battalion until November 1914. As you know, he was given the 1914-1915 Star. That was awarded to all those fighting the Germans between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915. You also have a Princess Mary's Christmas Box; they were given to everyone wearing the King's uniform on Christmas Day 1914.



Princess Mary's Christmas Box

On 30 Mar 15, the Bucks Battalion left their billets in Chelmsford and disembarked that evening at Boulogne. (In the early 1900s almost everyone from our village had been to High Wycombe; few had been as far as Aylesbury). What a day that was for John Rixon. Marching to the railway station, with his rifle on his shoulder, in a column of about 1,000 of his new comrades, with the crowds cheering and the Regimental band playing; then taking the troop train to the coast, going on board the Ferry, crossing the Channel and arriving, so far from home, in France, must have been an exciting experience for a country boy. He was allowed little time to reflect. The next afternoon, the Bucks Battalion marched four miles to Pont de Briques and boarded a train for a 50-mile journey to Cassel arriving at 11pm. They then marched three miles through the night to billets at Terdeghem and the next day, after a frantic session of spit-and-polish, the entire Brigade was inspected by the GOC. Five days later they marched for over 20 miles (pausing at Bailleul, where, scarcely two months later, Cpl Harry Dean would die of gas poisoning) to a training camp at Le Bizet, just outside Armentières. There, for the next four days, they were given a crash course on how to live and fight in the Trenches before occupying the front line near Ploegsteert – forever known to the Tommies as Plug Street. Now Private John Rixon was really in the War.

The Battalion then followed the classic British system of rotation in-and-out of the trenches. They sent three Companies into the firing line and kept one in reserve. Every four days they were relieved by men from another Regiment and retired to 'rest billets'. Four days later they reoccupied the trenches. In poorly-drained trenches the rotation was as short as 48 hours; in well-drained trenches – in chalk, typically – the rotation might be every 6 days. (The French kept their troops in the trenches until they were near exhaustion. Their troops eventually mutinied. The Germans followed something like the British pattern; their system broke down towards the end of 1917). With ponderous humour, the Battalion's historian wrote: *Very little training was carried out, but the Battalion was finding its feet and getting accustomed to trench warfare, acquiring a great deal of experience of field engineering, and last but not least, gaining considerable knowledge of the art of making uncomfortable conditions more or less comfortable.*

About three months later, on 27 Jun 1915, the Bucks Battalion left the trenches and were given a fortnight of 'strenuous training'. They then occupied trenches – that had been dug by the French – at Hébuterne. The British trenches at Plug Street had walls of sandbags; here, the

# SPEEN HERITAGE GROUP

*continued*

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French trenches were dug six feet deep into the ground. John Rixon and his comrades fought there for the next twelve months, with just one break – for ‘further training’ – of less than a month. Hébuterne was no picnic. With his customary understatement, the historian wrote: *A great deal of work was put in the trenches, and the difficulties of winter conditions were learnt and mastered.* He continued: *Patrols were very numerous, and brisk fighting in “No Man’s Land” was of frequent occurrence.*

On 30 Oct 1915, John was admitted to a Field Hospital suffering from influenza; he did not return to the Front until 25 Nov 1915. Three months later, on 15 Feb 1916 he was again treated by the medics, this time for a dislocated left shoulder. Curiously, the records say he was treated for a dislocated right shoulder five days later. He was employed on various duties, away from the Front, for the next seven months until he was again declared fit and on 7 Sep 1916 he rejoined his Battalion.

Consequently, John Rixon missed the First Day of the Somme (1 Jul 1916) but so did the rest of his comrades. The Bucks Battalion had been primed to move to the Front and take over the attack on Day 2; those orders were cancelled when it became clear that Day 1 had been a catastrophic disaster. John also missed the capture, and subsequent defence, of Pozières; a bloodbath that cost the Battalion over half of its strength – 9 Officers were killed and 15 wounded; 154 soldiers were killed and 433 wounded.



*Bucks Battalion at Pozières*

When John reported back for duty the Battalion had been withdrawn from the Front and was busily training the new draft that had been rushed to France to make good the losses. He would have been in ‘A’ Company which originally consisted of 250 men from around High Wycombe and Marlow. You have a picture of him, wearing a Lance Corporal’s

stripe, in a group with four cheerful comrades. In front of them is a piece of slate reading “Somme Faces”. I think that photo was taken during this period of recuperation and those are John’s surviving pals.



*John Rixon and Somme pals*

By November 1916 the Battalion was judged ready to return to the fight; they occupied the Le Sars sector. The historian says: *This was the most miserable sector in the experience of the Corps. From all sides ... the position was under the complete observation of the enemy, whilst for miles behind the line every movement could be clearly seen. The trenches were full of water, and constantly falling in; of accommodation (that is, when withdrawn from the trenches and rotated to the rear) there was practically nothing. Shelling was considerable, especially at night, and all rations had to be man-handled over at least two miles of shell-torn land.* A mere six weeks later, to give the men some respite, a move was made to Bécourt, and then to Abbeville – for another three weeks of training. But the year ended well for John Rixon. On 29 Nov 1916 he was awarded the Good Conduct badge – which increased his pay – and the next day he left for 10 days’ Leave, in England.

*The second installment of this 4-part article will appear in the next issue.*



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A photograph of a garden path leading through a rose archway. The path is made of light-colored gravel and is flanked by a well-manicured green hedge on the left and a lawn on the right. The archway is covered in dense green foliage with numerous red and white roses. In the background, a white building is visible through the trees.

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