



Spring 2023

Issue 86

THE SPEEN & NORTH DEAN *News*



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Welcome!

to the Spring Edition of the
S&NDN.

With a spring in our step and summer approaching I hope you are all ready for a whirlwind of events coming our way culminating with the biennial Speen Festival in September. Look out for further details of everything planned either in the Village Messenger or on the Speen Sales & Wants WhatsApp.

These events are organized by our own army of volunteers who give up their time and energy to help raise funds to maintain our beautiful village assets for generations to come. Without their enthusiasm we would not have our vibrant community. I urge you all to support these events whenever you can by either attending and/or volunteering.

We sadly say farewell to some friends of our villages who were active in village life, who we remember in this edition.

Best Wishes

Jill Roberts

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Front cover: Photograph of Cardiac Hill taken by Jeni Fairey

Next Edition

Copy for the next edition is due by 10th July with a planned publication date of early August. Please send photos separately from text, together with captions and a consent form (downloaded from the S&NDN website www.speenbucks.org.uk) if any photos are of children. Please send to editor.sndn@speenbucks.org.uk.

With grateful thanks

To all our advertisers for their support of this magazine and to all the volunteers who deliver it to your door.

Welcome Packs

The Good Neighbours scheme was set up many years ago and is now run by Pat Richardson in Speen. The service is to provide new Speen residents with a Welcome Pack of village information, so if you know of anyone new to the area please call Pat Richardson on 01494 488627.

Village News

If you are not already signed up to The Village Messenger do email Village@SpeenBucks.org to be put on the mailing list, with the word 'include' in the subject line - they will keep you up to date via email on a monthly basis with all the latest village news and important dates.

SPEEN & NORTH DEAN NEWS COMMITTEE

JILL ROGERSON (CHAIRMAN), TOM DENT (ADVERTISING/TREASURER), JILL ROBERTS (EDITOR), CHRISTINE RYMAN (NORTH DEAN)

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WHAT'S ON

in Speen & North Dean

REGULAR EVENTS

Sundays	Regular Service of Worship	Speen Chapel 10.30am	Speen Church 488753 pastor@speenchurch.uk
1st & 3rd Sundays	BCP Holy Communion	St John's Church, Lacey Green 8.00am	
Tuesdays Term Time Only	Speen & North Dean Tiddlers & Toddlers	Speen Chapel Hall 9:30-11:30am	speennorthdeantoddlers@gmail.com

MAY

Sunday 7th	Coronation Tea Party	The Marquee, Speen Playing Fields	2pm - more information to follow
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JUNE

Saturday 17th	Speen Ball	Speen School	More information later
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JULY

Saturday 8th	Speen Fete	Speen Playing Fields 2-5pm	Circus Theme
Sunday 16th	SHH Jazz	The Park at Great Hampden	Grainne Suter 07778803260



LACEY GREEN
PARISH COUNCIL

Roger Craft and Philip Suter – Councillors

New notice board and street sign at junction of Water Lane

In October the notice board was knocked down by a car. A new one was ordered and erected in late February. The old Water Lane sign could not be used in conjunction with the new notice board. The Parish Council have bought a replacement sign that will be installed shortly.

Speed Watch

In January 2022 Speen took delivery of its own MVAS – Movable Vehicle Activated Sign for warning vehicles they are exceeding the 30 mph limit and also adding

the number of offending vehicles to the data collected. Unfortunately, in February, along with others in the area, it was vandalised and the expensive battery stolen. The unit still has had to have an exterior body reinforcement added and the unit should be back in Speen by April, advising motorists to slow down. It will move around three locations in the village;

Dog Fouling Signage

A new anti-dog fouling sign was put up near the Chapel in February and the Parish Council is arranging with the Buckinghamshire Council's dog warden to visit Speen to discuss the putting up of further anti-dog fouling signage.

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SPEEN SCHOOL & LITTLE APPLES PRESCHOOL

Lisa Davies, Headteacher



The children at Speen School have been very busy this term.

Our School Council have decided that they would like to support the Horses Trust as their chosen charity. They have been along to visit the residents to see how important the money we raise is and what it will do to help.

World Book Day was on Thursday 2nd March and the children spent



a whole week embracing their favourite books and stories. We celebrated our love of reading by mystery reader events, assemblies and our dress up day (enjoyed by



staff and children alike!). We were also lucky enough to be joined by Jo Binder reading part of Matilda for the children.



Little Apples have also been learning about people who help us in our community. They have learnt about fire fighters, doctors, dentists, postal workers and builders. A huge thank you to Ruban and Vicky who showed them around the shop and post office.



SPEEN SCHOOL PTA

Charlotte Harrison, PTA Co-Secretary

Winter term news from Speen School PTA

It was a very busy end to the year for Speen School and Little Apples. The Christmas Fair returned in November after a two year absence due to Covid-19 and it was wonderful to see so many families enjoying themselves and taking in the Christmas cheer! Over £800 was raised



towards replacing some of the existing playground equipment. Many thanks to everyone who came along. December also saw the return of the annual Wreath Making Course run by Helen Davies. It was



a wonderful evening with lots of creativity! The end of Term saw Father Christmas visit School and bring the children each a present. The children also had a lovely Christmas Party with lots of fun and games.



We are very pleased to confirm that as a result of funds raised from the Christmas Fair and historical resources, a new Pirate Ship, Playhouse and Climbing Wall have now been installed at the School. We are sure the children will spend many happy hours enjoying these! Thank you to the parents and school staff who gave up their time to help remove the old pirate ship.

Upcoming events for your diaries include the Safari Supper on 25 March 2023. A real Village staple and a fantastic way to enjoy lovely food and drink and to finish off with a licensed bar and disco back at the School. We will also be organising an Easter Egg Hunt for the children at the end of this Term which should be a great way to start the Easter Holidays!

Please also note that Speen Ball is returning on 17 June 2023 and will be a fantastic evening for the whole village. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Finally, a big thank you to everyone for their clothing donations to our Bags2School fundraiser. We will confirm the final amount raised shortly.

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SPEENCHURCH

Pastor Tim Deller

Our passion is to “love God and love others”: our neighbours, those in our immediate community, and those who live far away.

Whether it's carers and tots at Tiddlers and Toddlers on Tuesday mornings, welcoming hikers with a cup of coffee and a slice of cake as they pass through the churchyard, or at our regular informal Kings Café worship services (which includes breakfast!) or Sunday morning meetings, Speen Church fellowship is a place where everyone is welcome!

We were overwhelmed by the response to our Pop-Up Soup kitchen to support the relief efforts following the devastating earthquake in Syria and Turkey. Thank you to everyone who took part: over £1000 was raised for the DEC earthquake appeal.



Our hearts continue to break for the suffering and pain caused by the war in Ukraine, many of us have come to know some of those affected personally as we welcome Ukrainians fleeing from the conflict into our homes, church and community. The Chapel was open on the anniversary of the Russian invasion for those who wished to take time to reflect and pray for the situation.

There is plenty happening at Speen Church this Easter

we look forward to welcoming you:

Easter Garden

Explore the Easter Story and discover the empty tomb in the Easter Garden in Speen Churchyard open from 26th March

Maundy Thursday

Fellowship supper with communion and reflection 7pm

Good Friday

Family friendly walk meeting at 9.30am at the Chapel followed by refreshments and hot cross buns

Easter Day

Early morning open air service 8am

Further details: www.speenchurch.org

SPEENTENNIS CLUB

If you are new to our community, or even if you are a more established resident, we would like to highlight the wonderful amenity that is Speen Tennis Club's outdoor court on the Speen playing fields.

The well-maintained and recently resurfaced tennis court is managed by a committee of village residents. New members to the committee are always welcome - duties are extremely light, so please contact one of the existing committee if you are interested in helping out.

Use of the court is reserved for members of the Speen Tennis Club, for which there is a modest annual membership fee. Currently the Family membership rate is £60, a single Adult membership £35 and a Junior membership £10 for the year. This allows unlimited use of the court, subject to availability.

We provide an online booking system so you can be sure of the court's availability before setting out from home.

We are planning to offer a programme of tennis coaching for members later in the year with an LTA qualified coach and will send out details in due course.

At the moment, we do not organise any competitive matches between members but we are happy to put members in touch with other players. Equally we are willing to arrange any other forms of play if there is a demand from members.

If you would like to join our club, or would like more information about tennis in Speen, please contact Philippa at lanetribe@yahoo.co.uk.



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Chairmen's Report year to January 2023

This year was the first in the last 3 that we were able to complete a full calendar of events. There have been many young families moving into the village in that time and we really wanted to engage with them.

We made three organisational changes to help

Our first and most important task was succession planning and to recruit some new trustees, generally with children who use the fields. We hosted an open village bar night in the village hall at the end of April and presented The History and Service of Speen Playing Fields to our Community (which you can see on our website.) It was extremely well received as is evidenced by the fact that we now have 5 new Trustees in Richard Johnson, Nick Ridley, Julia Gaiter, Liz Patroe and Shaun Butler.

Secondly, as part of this process, we created an extensive database of villagers who could be called on to help with the maintenance of the fields. They were all emailed in accordance with data protection and asked if they were happy to become "Friends of the Fields." So we now have a Volunteer Army of over 250 people that we can call on for support. Unfortunately, the response from this Army to work parties has been poor and we are developing more targeted ways to get these brave citizens to help.

Our third organisational improvement was to create Roles and Responsibilities and to allocate them to the Trustees, trying to have 2 Trustees one old and one new working together, this is definitely working as evidenced by Duncan & Shaun on Field Maintenance, Liz and Jo on Communications.

In terms of projects, this was very much a year of maintenance and improvement of existing facilities and equipment.

When the old Hayter mower died at the beginning of the Spring, we set up a sub group to look at the various alternatives. The cost could well have been anything from £15,000 to £40,000, depending on the combination of mini tractors and cutting trailers. We also looked at outsourcing to a contractor, which would be more expensive than mowing in house. Duncan eventually found on eBay an identical machine to ours, but 9 years younger with far less use, which we bought for £2,500 and Keith Jones & I collected from Durham. This machine is working well and we have kept the old one for spare parts. We would like to thank the Parish Council for the grant of £1,000 towards this cost.

Other maintenance includes

- Completion of roundabout renovation £860
- A major upgrade of the Holmes Pavilion electrics, with many thanks to Andy at a cost of £1,700,
- Bike Park and half pipe repairs £1,000
- Replacing the baby swings and posts & sand for the sand pit £800
- Website update

Our main events were more successful than ever starting with Funday, which thanks to Matt was a great day out and fundraiser, which it wasn't supposed to be!

The draw also enjoyed record support thanks to Cristina and her team of collectors, and raises over 30% of our income.

Similarly, our Guy Fawkes celebration with the Menacing Missile Ship Moskva, was a huge success with a record attendance of over 600 people and record profits, thanks to Duncan, Shaun and all the builders plus the many helpers on the night. The PTA ran the BBQ & Bar and we were able to add a £500 donation to their profit on the night to help them buy new play equipment for the school. We are a small village and we believe that partnering other fundraising organisations is important. We were also able to invest to secure the next three year's supplies of fireworks.

There was again this year a group who objected to the environmental impact of the bonfire and we created an environmental sub-group, to produce an Environmental Statement for the Playing Fields. This will be available on our website speenbucks.org.uk/speen-groups/speen-playing-fields.

We planted a new Christmas tree this year, which Duncan sourced and collected from Nuneaton on a flatbed truck, complete with its own earth, and it seems to have taken well to date. We also continued with our traditional Xmas Treecycling service and thanks to all who love bouncing on trees on a cold January morning.

Finally, we would like to pay our respects and appreciation to John Holmes, who was Chair of the Playing Fields for many years and was a major driving force for this Community. We owe him a huge debt and he is sorely missed.

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SPEENFETE

Helen Davies & Clare Morris - Co-Chair, Speen Fete Committee

Roll Up, Roll Up for all the Fun of a Circus Fete



A great afternoon awaits young and old alike at this year's circus themed fete. With all your favourite side-shows, live music, professional entertainment, and delicious refreshments please put the 8 July in your diaries.

The Fete is not only great fun but one of the biggest village fundraisers of the year. Last year we raised over £4,850 including £1,000 to the local Ukraine to Chilterns charity and donated £350 to each of the 11 village organisations that participated in the

day. If you would like to nominate a local charity to be 'Charity of the Year' please contact the address below to receive an application form. These need to be submitted by 13 April.

If you would like to be involved on the day either standalone or as part of a village organisation, please do get in touch.

fete@speenbucks.org.uk

THE CLOTHESBARN

Chris Dunnington and the Clothes Barn team

The Clothes Barn in Princes Risborough, now in its 10th month, continues to be an important hub, a clothing bank, for all of the local Ukrainian families, living with their hosts or independently, in Risborough, Loosley Row, Lacey Green, Speen and other surrounding villages.

We have a small and regular group of kind, dedicated volunteers, who cover sessions - currently open twice a week - helping visitors to find items, sort donations and even take clothing home to be laundered. In addition, we currently have two youngsters, who help on a Saturday, as part of their Duke of Edinburgh project; another has just completed 6 months with us.

It's hard to imagine, when on the day of writing this, it is snowing and bitter cold outside, we will soon be swapping our remaining winter stock back to spring and summer clothing, all of which has been in storage since last September.

By the time this edition of SNDN is printed and distributed, I'm certain that the Clothes Barn will be in a position to yet again receive your kind donations of clean, good quality items, ready for the coming summer season.

On behalf of the Ukrainian community who fall under the Ukraine to Chilterns charity umbrella, I'd like to say a huge thank you for the continued, much needed, generous support.

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SPEENHELPING HOSPICES

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Gráinne Suter

We had a busy end to the year with a range of fundraising events in the village.

The **Christmas Market** in November was really successful, and the takings were up on 2021. We raised £3,186. Thank you to all the wonderful stallholders and to you shoppers in Speen who came and supported this event, which is as much a social occasion as it is a retail opportunity!

The **Pub Quiz Night** on Friday 2nd December hosted by Al Bowyer and Jill Rogerson was a very lively evening. Al and Jill had compiled great questions and Jill kept the teams to time with great skill and diplomacy. The home-made cottage pie and apple crumble went down a treat and we raised £1,336.

Wrapping up the year we had the **Christmas Hamper** raffle that raised £827 and the **Carol Singing** £601 over two nights. Unfortunately, the weather was very harsh that week and one night was cancelled as the ice was treacherous. The carollers were truly stoic turning out in such freezing conditions.

Thank you to Dorothy Ratcliffe who requested that donations in her husband's name Harold "Hal" who died in November were made to Speen Helping Hospices.

Each of the four hospices have now received £4,500. This can only be achieved with your assistance so thank you for that. We know there are many competing demands for your support and we are very grateful for the help you give us. Please continue to do so, many families in our locality alone have valued the kindness and care their loved ones have received from the hospices.

On 15th March 2023, was the **Charity Golf Day** for SHH at Burnham Beeches Golf Club. This was the first golf event organised by Speen Helping Hospices. It was a Fourball Stableford Team Competition. When launched in January it sold out within seven days. Full details of how the event went and who the winners were will be found on www.shh-shop.org.



For our first fundraising event in 2023, we had the **Valentine's Dinner Raffle**. The meal included a cocktail, canapes, home cooked 3 course meal, chocolates, champagne and roses and was delivered to the two lucky couples Jill and Hugh Roberts and Gill and Richard Biffa. As you can see below they certainly appreciated their supper.

"Very many thanks to all at SHH for the superb Valentine's dinner delivered to us last night as one of the lucky winners. Not only was it delicious it was beautifully presented. Richard and Gill"

"A big thank you also to SHH. We too had the most

delicious meal delivered to us, thanks Amanda. We thoroughly enjoyed it and if there is a draw again next year, we will certainly support SHH and highly recommend everyone buys a ticket or two because it could be you next time. Thanks again for a fabulous dinner. Jill & Hugh x"

The raffle raised £500, not as much as last year's figure of £840 so perhaps this event has run its course. We know some events lose their appeal and so are constantly looking for new ways to raise funds. If you can help us, please contact me, all ideas and support gratefully received!

Then the **Spring Lunch at the Horses Trust** on the 3rd May – all tickets for this popular annual event have already been sold.

We are planning an **Open Gardens Day** 18th June (if you would like your garden to be part of this event, please contact me on 07778803260) and the highly successful **Jazz in the Park** on the 16th July. Martin Hart and his group will be back and Frank Waldron on sax. Put this in your diary, it is always a very special occasion.

Funding of hospices - Independent hospices receive no more than a third of their funding from the government and are dependent on charitable donations to keep hospices running. Every event we

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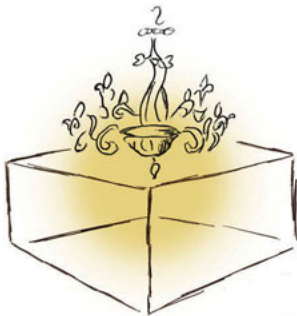
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Fundraising Challenge - Help raise money for Speen Helping Hospices in 2023. Speen Helping Hospices are looking for people to raise money for SHH by taking part in a local fun run/half marathon/cycle race or other event.

If you are planning or considering taking part in a sporting event, would you help others by fundraising for Speen Helping Hospices as you run/cycle/swim?

We, at Speen Helping Hospices will support you on your fundraising journey, we would promote your participation locally and via social media and our website to attract sponsorship.

If you are up for this challenge, now is the time to plan it, visit our website at <http://www.shh-shop.org/FundraisingChallenges.htm> for information.

Future events in 2023

Speen Festival
event to be confirmed.

Wine Tasting
6th October

Charity Bridge with Afternoon Tea
11th October

Christmas Market
18th November
11.00 to 4.00pm in the Chapel Hall.

Pub Quiz Night
date in December to be confirmed
in the Chapel Hall.

Carol Singing
dates in December to be confirmed.

For further information about all our events check out our website www.shh-shop.org

Don't forget if you would like to support or sponsor a fundraising event, for example a golf tournament, offer a prize for a raffle or would like to help us in some way,
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RECIPE

Kate Vale

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This was by far the most popular soup at The Studridge Social before Christmas so it only seems right to share the recipe with those who supported us so faithfully.

Over the 6 weeks we opened you helped us to raise over £900 to share between Wycombe Homeless Connection and One Can Trust, so thank you all.

We hope to be back again towards Easter, so do keep an eye out!

Cooking time 35 minutes

Serves 6

- Heat the oil and butter in a saucepan, add the butternut squash, onion and garlic, then cover and cook gently for 5 minutes.
- Add the chilli and ginger, then cook for a further 5 minutes.
- Add the hot stock, bring to the boil, then



Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
50 g butter
1 large butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and diced
2 onions, diced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 red chilli, finely diced
2cm root ginger, peeled and chopped
900 ml hot vegetable stock
50g sachet creamed coconut (or a fifth of a 250 g pack and freeze the rest in 50g blocks)

To garnish: fresh coriander leaves

- cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes until the butternut squash is soft.
- Blend until smooth
 - Reheat gently before adding the coconut cream. Season to taste, then serve garnished with a few coriander leaves.

John Holmes

10th August 1937 - 6th December 2022

by John's Family

John died early in December, just three months after the death of his wife, Gloria. Together they were involved across many activities within the community in Speen and the wider area and are greatly missed by their family, friends and villagers.

John achieved an engineering degree at Imperial College, London and worked initially at English Electric in Stafford, commissioning the electrical controls for large steel and paper mills. He and Gloria were married in 1960 and they moved, after the arrival of their son, Tim, to Downley where Suzanne, their daughter, was born in 1964.

John became Chief Engineer for Quaker Oats where he designed food factories, moving jobs in 1976 to Amersham International where he organised laboratories for the manufacture of radioactive isotopes from Wales to Japan. His final role for 15 years before retirement was as regional property director at NHS Estates overseeing hospital modernisation and the construction of new offices.

The Holmes family moved to Speen in 1976, to Cherry Dell. John quickly became involved in community affairs; he helped form the Princes Risborough Rotary Club where he became President in 1980, continuing as its secretary until 2 years ago.

John was a very active participant in the Speen Community and helped organise the Speen Fete for many years. While Tim and Susie were clearing the house after his death, they found a very precise scale drawing marking exactly where each stall should go which demonstrated his meticulous attention to detail.

He also helped set up the Speen Festival with its amazing productions from 1999 – quickly becoming so successful that the organisers realised that they needed a covered space. So, in 2000, John bought a second-hand marquee and subsequently oversaw the purchase of the new one in 2010. The marquee has been the base for many happy village events - John had a knack of motivating the village chaps to help put the marquee up with the promise of a beer afterwards.

John was Chair of the Village Playing Fields Association for many years and he and Gloria were delighted when the Pavilion was named The Holmes Pavilion in



2021 in honour of their joint work in supporting the Playing Field, the Pavilion and the many events which took place there. John was also involved with various other community groups including the Save Our Pub group. Up until a month before he died, John was an active member of the men's discussion group which he had started.

John's other local interests included undertaking cycle rides for Buckinghamshire's

Historic Churches Trust, membership of the Chiltern Society, organising walks and group holidays for the Swallows (a group of friends) and enjoying watching Wormsley Cricket, to name a few.

The family say that they received a lovely letter of condolence that read:

"John was a man of great kindness with a sense of duty and service. Quite old-fashioned qualities that are so often hidden. Looking back, they showed up in his actions and achievements. I think he had that rare ability to have ideas and then actually instigate them and pull in others to help. It was his lovely nature that enabled him to do this."

Tim provided this quote from John's Life Story written by him in June 2020:

"I am very fortunate to have a loving wife and a close and supportive family, and many good friends. We live in a glorious location in lovely countryside in a very active village."

In their later years, John and Gloria were supported increasingly by Tim and Suzanne, their children, and continued to enjoy the company of their seven grandchildren of whom they were extremely proud. As a grandfather John loved to support the children's school sports and encouraged them in their studies and careers. He was always interested in what they were doing and considered in his advice.

The family say that John kept optimistic despite the debilitating nature of Parkinson's disease which had developed over the last three years. They feel that in a way it is a blessing that John is now reunited with Gloria, they have no doubt that the two of them are up there planning a range of projects together!

Lilian Cash

by Helen Hibbert, Lilian's daughter

Lillian and Eric moved to North Dean in 1983 when they bought The Farmhouse. They were warmly welcomed by the members of the village. Mum in particular quickly settled into village life and soon became actively involved in the Village Hall Committee.

Her highly competitive nature resulted in her submitting home grown produce in every category at the annual North Dean Fete



and she took the competition very seriously indeed. Both Mum and Dad were both foodies, loved to cook and host dinner parties.

Mum and Dad spent 25 happy years in the village during which time they made many friends and memories which Mum treasured to the end.

Mike Gosling

17th March 1943 - 5th January 2023

by Kate Vale

Mike lived in the village for 17 years with his lovely wife Una in Studridge Lane. You might have seen him with his two Westies walking around the village.

His family came from the East End and he moved Acton before moving out to High Wycombe in 1966. In 1967, Mike and Una came to the Speen village fete and fell in love with the village! It took a few more years to move here!



Mike had his own toolmaking business before retiring and enjoying travelling with Una.

In the past few years Mike had been living with dementia supported by Una. He will be sorely missed by friends.

Over recent months, two long-standing members of our two villages have sadly died

David Evans

David Evans lived for many years at Midmede, Chapel Hill, before moving to Princes Risborough in about 2005 with wife Margaret who predeceased him a few years ago. David was a much admired local builder, responsible for the Archway development in Speen amongst others, auctioneer and golfer. David died last month, our condolences to his children who spent their childhood in Speen: Robbie and Dawn.

John Newman

John Newman had recently moved down from Piggotts Hill in North Dean to Spring Cottage, Chapel Hill because of failing eyesight. He had lived in the area for over 30 years and his wife Mary had predeceased him some ten years ago. John died unexpectedly on 26th February 2023 after a fall.

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It is well known that Wild Boar have been well established in Kent and the Forest of Dean for many years and the distribution of wildlife changes fairly slowly. I was also aware of them in Oxfordshire in 2018. However, a reported sighting on the Bucks Bird Club website of three in Amersham on 9th November 2022 took me by surprise. I am not sure if this report has been verified or whether they were rare breed pigs that had escaped from captivity. If correct and they were to become established in the Chilterns they could pose a new challenge around the village with potential damage to gardens. Several residents have already encountered damage to their lawns from badgers this winter. Meanwhile a bold Muntjac has munched his way through pansies and daffodils right by people's front doors in Abbotswood.

Glis glis and rats continue to pose problems for villagers and this can result in people resorting to using poisons. Use of these outdoors should be avoided because the rodents do not die on the spot inside bait boxes. They wander off and die elsewhere and can then be taken by owls and kites which then die of secondary poisoning. I was alerted to a rather sick looking Tawny Owl in a village garden, which had been perched on a flower pot, for several days in November. I suspect that this bird had taken a poisoned rodent. Glis glis meanwhile will regularly use bird nesting boxes to rear their young in late summer. They are extremely good climbers and neither metal plates nor plastic tunnels at the entrance holes of the boxes deter them. Their usage is apparent from leaves inside the boxes when an annual clean is undertaken in the winter. I have been trialling different designs for boxes for a couple of years. I seem to be



having some success with boxes that are suspended

beneath horizontal branches which have been used by birds and not at all by Glis, (so far)! I have produced five more of these boxes to extend the test this year.

Unusual and interesting local sightings over the winter include a Black Redstart in Prestwood in October; 23 Ravens at Lodge Hill, near Saunderton on 10th October, as well as 43 Golden Plovers in late November and over 360 Skylarks in December. A couple of Hawfinches were present around Hampden Church during December and early January. In Lacey Green some large flocks with 195 chaffinches and 125 Linnets benefitting from a winter feeding programme were noted during winter surveys which also turned up one Snipe and 3 uncommon Jack Snipe. From Speen I was able to report 3 sightings of Woodcock during December and January. My most unusual record however was a Grey Heron that smashed into our dining room window in early December. The juvenile bird had been approaching our goldfish pond near the back of the house when it was startled and mistook the trees reflected in the glass as its escape route.

Birds are now investigating potential nest sites. Mallard have returned to the village in some numbers whilst Red Kites are constructing a nest off Coleheath Bottom. Elsewhere Peregrine Falcons can regularly be seen in the centre of High Wycombe, on the eastern side of the tower on St Mary's church, where a nesting platform has been provided for them.

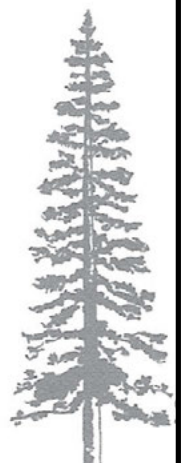
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DARVILLS HILL FARM

Charlotte Downing

Reconnecting with a small farm on Flowers Bottom Lane – Ghost ponds and mysterious watery goings on at Darvills Hill

Our free-ranging pigs, like most pigs have a thirst that is seemingly unquenchable. We have resolved this issue by providing them with a plumbed in water trough, but before this we did a daily top up of their water from the field tap. I would often leave the tap running while getting on with other jobs, as the trough could take some time to fill up. Invariably I would return to find the tap had already been mysteriously turned off. Could it be the ghostly hand of a farming ancestor who understands water is a precious resource?

This got me thinking about how livestock would have been watered on the farm before it was plumbed into the mains. The geography of the Chiltern plateau means there are no natural streams or rivers and historically water would be stored on farm in poetically named Dew ponds. A map from 1848 shows that our farm had a pond sited in one of our hay meadows, which in 2023 amounts to nothing more than a nettle filled dip in the ground. However,

its location makes perfect sense being some distance from the farmhouse's source of water and close to the surviving pond at the end of Turnip End.

Until recently ponds were an essential part of farm life, however the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust suggests that as many as 50% of farm ponds have been lost in the last 50 years as they are filled in to make room for more agriculture, leaving what are known as 'ghost' ponds like our one in the farmed landscape. Like many conventional farming practices this has contributed to a dramatic loss of biodiversity of plants, invertebrates and animals which are dependent on a healthy network of ponds for safe sanctuary, as they move through farmland habitats.

So, this Spring we will be carrying out some gentle excavation and regeneration of our pond to encourage the return of a 'wet' area to the farm for the benefit of nature, I'm also hoping our resident ghost will be content to see water conservation in action and worry less about keeping the tap turned off.

STUDRIDGE LANE POND UPDATE

Peter Symonds

Studridge Lane pond is a long established, man-made dew pond that was probably a source of water for farm animals many years ago. Concerns about the condition of the pond were first raised with the Lacey Green Parish Council, which owns the pond, nearly two and a half years ago. Some five years had elapsed with no maintenance work having been carried out and the vegetation had choked the pond. In conjunction with members of the village SEAG team numerous council meetings have been attended and proposals put forward to establish a proper management plan to improve the pond as a wildlife habitat and to give it a better appearance.

A plan has now been approved by the Parish Council for villagers to work in conjunction with a BBOWT (Bucks, Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust) project leader who runs their "Rough around the Edges" scheme. This scheme seeks to improve small local wildlife sites with involvement from local community groups. One the key benefits of BBOWT involvement is that they have access to funding to support such schemes whilst the Parish Council will be funding the provision of any

skips required. Funds are now secure and these may be used to buy tools and pay for support from Chiltern Rangers with the more extensive clearance work that may be needed in due course. Insurance cover will also be available to village volunteers working under the guidance of the BBOWT leaders.

The agreed management plan should see 25% of the pond being cleared each year on a regular rotation to prevent the pond becoming choked with vegetation as has happened in the past. A more detailed survey of the wildlife present will be prepared by BBOWT later in the Spring.

It was hoped to carry out a 25% clearance operation earlier this year in January or February. However, by the time everything had been signed off the frogs had returned to the pond and spawn was noted on 23rd February so it has been decided to have a "tidy-up" session during March and then carry out a proper clearance in the late summer when the water level is very low. Hopefully a significant restoration of the pond is now not far off.

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SPEENVILLAGE HALL

Bill Groves, Chair, Speen Village Hall Management Committee

After a difficult couple of years Speen Village Hall is back in full swing. We continue to regularly host bridge, men and women's yoga sessions and the WI. After three years absence we held a successful Christmas Fayre raising a little over £600 for Village Hall funds, thanks to all our helpers and for your support. Speen School PTA recently held a lively and well attended Pop up Pub Night to raise funds for their new play equipment.

The Studridge Social café held at the Hall each Thursday in November and December was a huge success. Our Committee were pleased to be able to help by allowing the Hall to be used rent free by Kate Slade and Kate Vale who ran the café and raised the amazing amount of £955 which they donated equally to the One Can Trust and Wycombe Homeless. Huge thanks to the Kates and everyone for their support, we are hopeful that the Café will restart in the Spring.

The start of the Café prompted us to pursue our idea of displaying artwork in the Hall. Ian Woodley kindly helped us get it underway by putting up artwork he wishes to sell, he is making a generous donation to a local charity from any sale. If other residents would like to display their own pictures,

paintings or photography for sale or simply for display please contact Jeanne Hanford (488402).

During the year we have undertaken lots of repairs and renewals at the Hall. The major works being a new hot water system and the restoration of the front brick and flint wall and the external redecoration of the woodwork and railings. Our next project is to update the internal lighting.

Speen Heritage Society have chosen the Hall as the site to erect a weather vane and you should see it in place shortly.

The Village Hall is a Charity and depends on rental income to keep it going. It is a great venue for meetings, clubs, events and parties – it is your Village Hall and in October 2024 we will celebrate 100 years of ownership – so please make use of it and help to keep it going for another 100 years! We are looking for one or two new committee members and would be very pleased to hear from you if you would like a chat about what it entails.

**Contact for bookings is
Sue Taylor on 488500.**

SPEENFESTIVAL

Cat Cook - Festival Coordinator

This Hill is Alive

The Speen Festival is a biennial celebration of the arts and creativity in the Chilterns and is a heady start to September with a mix of events created by the villagers of Speen and the surrounding communities. Whilst planning is only just getting underway, there are already proposals for a musical show, a Jazz concert, a wildlife photography talk and some art workshops. What would you like to enjoy in your village?

The show, The Sound of Music, will bring some familiar songs to our village marquee and will need actors and singers of all ages. No experience



is necessary, rehearsals will start after Easter holidays, so look out for audition flyers through your door.

Whilst profit is not a motive for the festival, over the years we have successfully been able to make significant donations to local and national charities. This is all achieved by volunteers, through existing skills or a willingness to have a go, through creativity and passions and the talents on display are always so impressive. One of the great joys of the festival is discovering the array of talents we have in our community. So please do get involved, I'm going to need a lot of helpers, in small and big ways. I would love to hear your ideas. You can find me at admin@speenfestival.org.

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Going Green in Speen and North Dean

The case for an air source heat pump (ASHP) was fairly simple for us. In March 2022, during a particularly nasty cold snap, and just a day after I'd placed a large order of oil at nearly £1.30 a litre, our oil boiler developed a fatal fault. In fact, 16 years after the renovation work on our house, the entire heating system was on its last legs, including an ageing hot water cylinder and a crumbling oil tank. Thankfully, all the insulation we'd installed was in good shape.

We initially shopped around for an oil boiler replacement. However, I felt we could do better than this and unfortunately kept the family shivering for another six weeks while I built an enormous spreadsheet figuring out if an ASHP was right for us. As the quotes started to come in, it became apparent the cost of a new ASHP would actually be cheaper thanks to zero-VAT on renewables and a £5,000 grant from the Government's Boiler Replacement Scheme.

Thame-based Delta T Heating Engineers (previously Maxas) took two weeks to do a neat and tidy installation of the 16kW Samsung system. They also serviced and integrated our legacy solar water system. The oil tank was chopped up and taken away for recycling. Throughout the process, SEAG's Ben Wilde was on hand with lots of knowhow and personal experience.

Apart from a couple of very cold spells, we've had a mild winter, so it's fairly hard to know if the running costs are good, although they seem fairly comparable to oil. This makes sense. The ASHP and its back-to-front fridge technology uses just one unit of electrical energy to produce three to four units of heat energy. A look at the data shows 1kWh of electricity has historically been about four times more expensive than 1kWh of oil energy.

I was a little worried the ASHP wouldn't manage in the cold because we don't have underfloor heating. However, the house has been warm and cosy using mainly existing radiators plus four upgraded ones. The unit runs quietly most of the time but in extreme cold, you can certainly hear it working. My gut feel is that we might need a small supplementary heat source if temperatures fall below minus-8C.

What has been a real surprise is the amount of CO2 we've been able to save. On some nights, when the wind has been blowing hard on wind turbines around the UK, we've cut emissions by up to 98%. Otherwise, we estimate our heating CO2 emissions will fall by about 70% over the year and will continue to fall as more renewable electricity comes on stream.



SEAG Home Energy Event 2023

By Jane Farley and Ben Wilde

Speen Environmental Action Group hosted a day of Home Energy Events on Sunday 5th, March.

In the morning, people were able to visit the homes of residents who already have renewable heating systems.

In the afternoon, the meeting hosted speakers including Shaun Butler, a local resident, who has



been helping people reduce their energy bills with some renewable technologies such as home energy batteries, and solar panels. He has a wealth of experience, know-how and the enthusiasm needed to

solve the problems we all face living in a village fuelled mainly by oil.

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UPDATE FOR THAME

We are excited to be moving to a new premises in Thame in early May 2022. Previously Twigs and Twine nextdoor to Waitrose in Greyhound Lane. We will be delighted to welcome you
Watch this space for details.....

Kirsty Shanahan, the second speaker, is a founder member of Bucks Community Energy. She was able to explain about current government grants, planning and the situation about changing systems in an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Some residents also shared their own experiences of having their homes refitted and the audience took part in a Q&A section, there was particular interest around the topic of local planning and installation expertise.

Visitors to the event enjoyed home-made plant-based cakes and tea and were able to get hands-on with some solar and battery technology being exhibited.

Feedback has been positive with comments about the content being quite sophisticated and very specifically focused for Speen and similar villages. If attendees have any further feedback we would be most grateful to receive it.

SEAG hope to follow up the event with further visits to homes later in the Spring or Summer. Please contact SEAG if you would like further information contact seag@btinternet.com

Mention was made of the village of Swaffham Prior which now has a community heating project underway following the hard work and enthusiasm of a group of villagers (google "heating Swaffham Prior" for more details). Is this something Speen could be thinking about?

TIDDLERS & TODDLERS



Every Tuesday morning Chapel Hall is buzzing with activity and fun as Tiddlers and Toddlers gather to play. It is wonderful to welcome back parents who once brought their own children to the group now returning with grandchildren!

We enjoyed a very special visit from Speen School's Little Apples Pre-School who treated us to some brilliant singing. It was great to recognise several faces from Toddler group last year now looking very grown up.

At Christmas we had a very special party to celebrate Jesus' birthday with games, festive snacks, songs and a retelling of the nativity story with help from some of the children!

We welcome all children 0-3yrs with their parents/carers on Tuesdays 9.30-11.30am at

Chapel Hall, Speen Church during term time, we'd love to see you!

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Getting to know Speen Village Community

When she asked the question, "How do you get to know the village's personality?" my reply was immediate. I almost said "go to the pub" until I realised that we do not have one. I was about to say, "stand outside the village shop" but it seemed more of a suggestion than any form of answer. She followed up her question with "I'm sure you agree that every village has a personality – I would just like to know a bit more about this one".

In retrospect, it was a very reasonable request. She has only been in the village six weeks then, but she got me thinking about something else. Every village does have a personality. It is created over time, by occupation and by activity. It is formed by woods and hills, bottoms and ends and while you can read the clues in the hedgerows and the lanes, it is really hard to feel the rounded personality unless you know some of the history and heritage.

Speen is such a lovely place. Its working heritage runs back into the artisans of the furniture industry who built a hamlet in the hills to exploit the beech forests. Its agricultural history runs back centuries before that, and its archaeological history to the wonderful remains of the Grimms Dyke. But if you want to know something of the village's personality and then you need to turn to Clive Rainbow and his wonderful **"SPEEN WW1 Casualties"** the names of whom are taken from the war memorial at the Chapel. You can still hear their voices today in terms of accents and speech patterns around the neighbourhood. They reflect the personality of the village in the sense that their surnames, many of whom reflect trades and no doubt their humour, are still a part of our lives. We also can reflect that they gave their lives to preserve the way of life they



had lived here in Speen.

So, I told my new friend that this was a good starting point, and she agreed. But this is only a first step towards understanding where you live. Speen Heritage Group, keepers of the Speen archive, are always keen to support local understanding of who we are as well as where we are, have provided two more steps. I recommended to my new friend she buy a copy of the **Speen Millennium Map** and hang it in her lobby. I intimated that every time she put on her shoes, she might glance at it and think about where she was going

in the village in terms of what happened there. I think of it as the physical framework of a mental map of village life running back generations. If you want to get into more detail on parts of the village at various times, you always have **"The Leaves of Time"** to fall back upon. This is of course Speen's own history book but unlike many history books, it is elegantly written and not intimidatingly long. It is another way in which Speen is fortunate place. Written by Bob Johnston and Martin Stockley, it is a perfect example of what a village history should contain, as well as incorporating many clues to the elusive personality of a village. You cannot read it without agreeing with my questions: all villages have a culture, and all villages have a personality. You can find out a lot from the social events and from mixing with your neighbours, but if you want to step further into understanding where you live, these 3 steps give you a perfect platform upon which to build that knowledge.

These three publications are available from
Peter Symonds Tel 01494 488016
or psymonds590@gmail.com

Looking Ahead to Winter

The colder months of autumn and winter can be a difficult time for older people and for those living alone.

Especially if you live in rural areas like the Chiltern Hills. Although our countryside is beautiful, accessing the outdoors, popping into Princes Risborough or making the most of our lovely countryside surroundings is much more challenging in the colder weather and when the darker nights draw in.

"According to Age UK, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone, and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member." Loneliness can be a real problem for those whose children have left home, their spouses or friends have passed away. Winter can be much harder for those living alone and if you don't get to see anyone or do anything, it can be very demoralising. And although it can seem daunting to ask for help, evidence proves that a companion carer - someone who visits regularly once or twice a week for a couple of hours at a time - can make a significant difference to enhance overall wellbeing and positive emotional outlook.

Sue is a companion carer for Ashridge Home Care and visits several people who live alone in Buckinghamshire. She says: "I have a great bond with my clients, we will sit and chat over a cup of

tea, discuss today's news, I can bring shopping and prescriptions with me." She continued: "They always open the door with a big smile knowing they have a visitor. Nowadays a lot of family live far away or are busy raising a young family. There's no shame in accepting help and companion carers can not only offer a great deal of practical support but are great company and a welcome distraction on an otherwise quiet day."

Now is the time to look ahead and consider how a companion carer could positively support you or maybe a loved one this winter.

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Pigotts 7 '48' Musical Evenings	Jeremy Hamilton	07834 224589
Speen Good Neighbours	Pat Richardson	01494 488627
Speen & North Dean Guides	Pauline Hall	01494 488372
Speen & North Dean News - Chairman	Jill Rogerson	01494 488315
Speen & North Dean News - Advertising	Tom Dent	01494 488943
Speen & North Dean Toddlers	Sandy Mitcheson	07747 635974
Speen Baptist Church - Pastor	Rev. Tim Deller	01494 488753
Speen Environmental Action Group (SEAG)	Jane Farley	07889 433630
Speen Festival	Cat Cook	01494 488939
Speen Fete - Chair	Clare Morris/Helen Davies	01494 488553
Speen Helping Hospices - Secretary	Maureen Laing	01494 488397
Speen Heritage Group - Chairman	Peter Symonds	01494 488016
Speen Marquee	Greg Cook	01494 488939
Speen Playing Fields	Tony Bobroff/Matt Davies	07768 330273
Speen C of E Infant School - Head	Lisa Davies	01494 488321
Speen School PTA - Co-Secretary	Charlie Harrison	07772 562979
Speen Stores	Ruban Kantharuban	01494 488258
Speen Tennis Court - Secretary	Philippa Lane	01494 488453
Speen Village Hall - Bookings	Sue Taylor	01494 488500
Speen Village Hall - Chairman	Bill Groves	01494 488180
Speen WI - Secretary	Jenny Pearce	01494 562333
St John's Parish Church	Revd Tony Bundock	01844 347741

LACEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Councillors for Speen

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