



Spring 2024

Issue 89

# THE SPEEN & NORTH DEAN *News*



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# Welcome!

to our Spring Edition.

As the clocks spring forward we can hopefully all look forward to a little bit of sunshine to brighten what has been a long wet winter.

The rain has not dampened the enthusiasm of our communities who have been extremely busy over the past months and are already planning exciting activities and events for us all to enjoy.

A huge thank you to everyone who sends in their articles for publication. I will always endeavour to publish everything that is sent through, but occasionally, due to limitations with space, it may not always be possible to do so.

We rely hugely on our advertisers. If you would like to place an advert which will help fund more space, please contact Tom Dent.

Best Wishes

Jill Roberts

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SPEEN & NORTH DEAN NEWS COMMITTEE

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

## Next Edition

Copy for the next edition is due by 15th 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 SNDN website [www.speenbucks.org.uk](http://www.speenbucks.org.uk)) if any photos are of children. Please send to [editor.sndn@speenbucks.org.uk](mailto:editor.sndn@speenbucks.org.uk).

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## 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](mailto: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.

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# WHAT'S ON

## *in Speen & North Dean*

### REGULAR EVENTS

Sundays	Regular Service of Worship	Speen Chapel 10.30am	Speen Church 488 753 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	speen-northdeantoddlers@gmail.com
3rd Thursday	Dementia Cafe	Speen Chapel Hall 10.00 - 12.00	trudi@ashridgehomecare.co.uk

### APRIL

Thursday 4th	Speen WI - Wallis Simpson & her King	Speen Village Hall 7.45pm	Jenny Pearce 562 333
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### MAY

Thursday 2nd	Speen WI - Warrior Women of The English The English Civil War	tbc	Jenny Pearce 562 333
Thursday 16th	Bi-Annual North Dean v Speen Golf Day	Hennerton Golf Club near Warsash RG10 8LT	North Dean - Dick Pooley 07785 996 511 richardpooley5@gmail.com 01494 269 615 Speen - Jo Allan, JAllan@channel4.co.uk 07733 303 374
Saturday 18th	24 Weddings and a Funeral a talk by Canon Tony Music, exhibition and refreshments	St John's Church, Lacey Green	Tickets Adults £10, Children £5 Further information contact tony.bundock49@gmail.com

### JUNE

Thursday 6th	Speen WI Eco Printing	Speen Village Hall 7:45pm	Jenny Pearce 562 333
Saturday 8th	Speen Fun Day	Speen Playing Fields	Matt Davies 07910 195 194

### JULY

Saturday 13th	Speen Village Fete	Speen Playing Fields	Clare Morris & Helen Davies fete@speenbucks.org.uk
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## APOLOGY CORRECTIONS FROM ISSUE 88

On page 9 of the last edition, some of the names against the photographs were incorrect or absent.

*For future contributions, when sending through photographs it is helpful to include names on each individual photograph where applicable to avoid confusion.*



Longest Drive  
Martin Hearn ND



1st  
Craig Watson, ND.  
40 points (on count back)



Nick Dibden

Apologies to Richard Pooley for mistaking him for Charlie Kent.

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# SPEEN STORES AND POST OFFICE

When we moved into Speen in August 1979 the shop opposite was run by Ann and John Cross. Although the petrol pumps were still outside from the era when Keith Jones's family ran the shop they were no longer in use and at that time Keith and Sharon Jones lived above it. The Post Office sold sewing materials, sweets and toys and was located opposite at The Old Post Office. Bread was still baked locally at Bakery Cottage on Chapel Hill.

Several different people ran the shop over the years till it finally closed in 1989 at which point Buckinghamshire Housing Association acquired the site and developed the social housing in Laurel Close along with the shop. In 1998 the shop was opened again with Sharon and David running it. (There is more information about this including a video at the Speen Village website).

The "It's a useful little shop" sign, designed by pupils from Speen School, still hangs outside today. Since 1998 the shop has been run by several people and the tenants were able to sublet the upstairs to hairdressers helping pay the rent to the housing association up until it was sold by Ali and Bob.

In October 2021 Ruban and Vicky took over. They have spent a lot of money on the shop, upgrading it and increasing the range of products. However, the upstairs could no longer be sublet to the hairdressers which had a significant impact as the hairdressing business not only helped pay the rent but brought in people from outside Speen who also used the shop.

Ruban and Vicky not only sell locally made bread and meat supplied by Kings but have also majored on selling fresh fruit and vegetables. Two mornings a week Ruban travels up to the Western International Market



at Southall in the early hours to buy from the wholesalers. The fruit and veg he sells are superior in quality and more inviting to that sold by the local supermarkets and particularly the supermarket home deliveries. The

mangoes and avocados, for example, must be the best for miles around. Ruban also provide fruit and vegetable boxes that can be delivered to local homes or collected from the shop.

When Ruban and Vicky took over the shop and Post Office it was many months before Ruban could become a Sub Postmaster due to Post Office bureaucracy. This meant he could not earn any income from the Post Office until the process was finally completed.

The Post Office offers an extensive range of services including everyday personal and business banking, travel money ordered online and collected from the branch, postal services including collection and returns.

We still have the benefit of a village shop and Post Office however many people use it infrequently or not at all. For some it is a point of return for unwanted online purchases or to buy a newspaper.

This is making it increasingly difficult to earn a living from the shop particularly with the current financial challenges. Unfortunately, this may mean we lose our shop and Post Office all together. With neither a pub nor shop we will all miss out.



Speen is frequently described by estate agents as a "sought after village community" and this may well add a premium to the value of our homes. The shop is a key part of this and to keep that going we all need to use it.

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# SPEEN HERITAGE GROUP

Peter Symonds

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## *100 years of Speen Village Hall usage*

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### *The early history*

The brick and flint building was originally built back in 1874 as a Temperance Hall following a split in the religious community in the village. A number of people in the Temperance Movement sought to establish their own separate place of worship. Following a reconciliation in 1893 the building was acquired by the church and was used for Sunday school gatherings and also as a rehearsal hall for the Speen Brass band. The hall contained a raised dais with steps leading to a pulpit.



Facilities constantly needed upgrading to keep pace with rising standards. By 1970 the present kitchen and toilets together with a front porch were added. One significant feature of the building had been a stone carving over the entrance door engraved by the famous local stone cutter from North Dean, Eric Gill. Unfortunately, this was accidentally destroyed in the course of building works. Mains drainage was finally bought onto the site and a new storeroom added at the rear of the property and these changes resulted in an increase in usage by village organisations and the pre-school group.

### *Village Hall use from 1924*

In 1924 the church no longer had a need for the building and it was sold to the village community for £125 using loans from villagers which were repaid with the benefit of funds from the 1925 and 1926 Speen fetes. A Trust deed was drawn up to govern management of the hall and the current hall committee continue to operate in accordance with the deed. The original building had little by way of facilities and relied on a coke stove for heating, oil lamps for lighting and water was collected from roof gutters. Mains water and electricity were brought in during the 1930's. A corrugated iron storeroom and kitchen were built on the side with a chemical toilet at the rear. There were no drains with the kitchen sink discharging through the wall into the ground.

### *Post war period*

The Hall committee undertook significant maintenance work rewiring the building throughout and installing electric heaters. Don White was photographed in 1957 repainting the window frames. In 1960 the roof was re-slatted and the interior redecorated with the benefit of a grant from the Carnegie Trust. At this time the hall was placed under the Public Trustee for Charity Lands to ensure its interests were permanently safeguarded.

### *Modern additions*

In more recent times various historical and local connections have seen further additions made to the building. In 1977 the Speen Jubilee Celebrations Committee provided funds for new wrought iron gates, made at Gomme's forge in Loosley Row, to be added. Similarly, the Speen Millenium Committee donated funds for an arch and light to be added above the gates in 2002. A stained-glass window in the porch was added in 2000 to commemorate "The Leaves of Time" pageant, which was part of the first of the bi-annual village festivals. Most recently a weathervane has been added to the front gable wall featuring a "Speen Bodger" at his pole lathe, celebrating the traditional local craftsman who supplied the Wycombe chair industry with wood turnings.

### *2024*

It is a hundred years since its inception as a village hall. Look out for centenary celebrations during the year and maybe consider hiring the hall for events, parties and activities.

Thanks to the hall committees who have maintained and improved the hall over the years and to Martin Stockley and Bob Johnson for recording the history in *The Leaves of Time*.

*Speen Heritage Group*

*protecting and promoting the history and heritage of the village of Speen*

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# SPEEN SCHOOL & LITTLE APPLES PRESCHOOL

Lisa Davies



What a busy spring term we are having at Speen School!



We have been taking care of our local environment by going on litter picks in the local area. The eco-council have also raised funds to purchase litter picker sets that families can borrow to use over weekends. The children participated in ventures such as House Plant Week where they bought plants for each classroom and the Great British Birdwatch week where they made bird feeders for the local birds. We are actively working towards our eco-flag and should be awarded it by the summer term.

Reception have been learning all about traditional



stories. They are very knowledgeable about the history of stories and can retell favourites as well as making up their own. As part of this unit of work we invited the Oxford Story Museum into school to work with us on the Anansi Spider story. We had such great fun dressing up and helping the story teller perform.



We also enjoy a celebration at Speen School and had a wonderful celebrating Chinese New Year. The children made lanterns, told

stories, danced and made noodles. We have discovered our favourite sauce is soya sauce (we were not so sure about the chilli sauce!).



## SPEEN SCHOOL PTA

Charlotte Harrison, PTA Treasurer

### *Spring Term News from Speen School PTA*

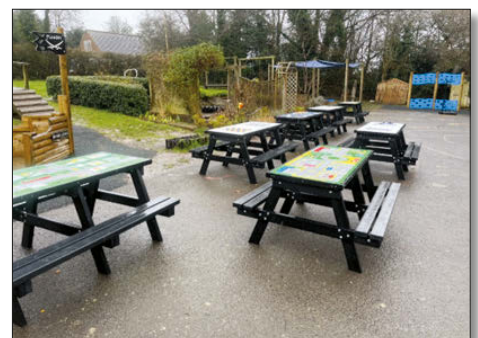
In December we held our Christmas Fair for the second year running. We had a great turnout and lots of happy children and families. The children did some lovely singing and we had some delicious bakes and treats for the adults, and plenty of stalls to keep the little ones busy. Again, we would like to thank everyone who donated items, purchased raffle tickets or popped along to our Christmas Fair. We managed to raise an amazing £737.48 profit. As well as the Christmas Fair, we also ran another popular wreath making course in the school hall with the help of Helen Davies, which raised almost £200 profit. Overall, we had a very successful December.

Safari Supper is planned for the end of March. This is a hugely popular event and as well as raising a lot of money for the school, it's a brilliant social event. Planning is in full swing and we are really looking forward to welcoming lots of villagers and school parents to this event.

We also have some lovely events planned for the children this term. The children will be taking part in an Easter Egg hunt during the last week of term. Each child will take home a delicious chocolate treat. We will also be running an Easter bonnet making competition, with prizes for the best entry. Entries will be judged at the school disco planned for the children on the last day of term.

With all the funds raised over this past year, the PTA have replaced all of the outdoor picnic benches, which get very well used by the children.

We are also purchasing an outdoor storage unit and looking to help with further playground resources.





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## *North Dean Village Hall Quiz Night*

by Christine Ryman

On a chilly Saturday evening on 11th November last year, North Dean held a quiz night at the village hall. The venue was filled with the clever folk from our village(!) plus outsiders from Speen, Lacey Green and other friends.

It's been a while since NDVH was packed out to this level (we even held emergency meetings to resolve this issue..). How fortunate to have a problem of this nature. Even more fortunate were we to be quizzed by Geoff and Clare from Speen, who entertained us the whole evening with their usual joie-de-vivre, accompanied by what I thought were really difficult questions!!

We were treated to 3 varying strengths of delicious curry, which took the chill away from the night, all made by our delightful volunteers from the committee.

It is fair to say a jolly good evening was had by all and most importantly, we managed to raise over £700! Wow! So, a huge thankyou to all for your continued support to our events and generous contributions to make this cold winter's evening so successful, warm, fun-filled and memorable.

Oh, and a massive congratulations to the winning team - Phil and Jan's table with Chris & Laura Waterton, Geoff & Mary Ames and Dave & Lin Carroll - Bravo!

## *Guarding Against Rooftop Fraudsters and Van Tool Theft*

by Stan Jones

As spring approaches (hopefully!), many homeowners eagerly embark on renovations and maintenance projects, including essential rooftop repairs and upgrades. However, when having work done on your roof, you should keep the following in mind:

It is possible, that a minor repair is all that is needed. Always get a second opinion and a written quote if someone suggests you should have your whole roof replaced.

If you ask for quotes on the internet, you open yourself up to being contacted by anyone - reputable builders and roofing companies, but also fraudsters. It is better to ask friends and neighbours, who had work done in the past, for recommendations.

Do not rely on a photo that seems to have been taken of the damage on your roof.

If you are elderly and are in any doubt about work that is being offered, ask your adult children, friends or neighbours for advice before agreeing to expensive work being carried out on your property.

Any fraudulent activity from gross overcharging or doing work that doesn't need doing, should be reported to the police on 101 and to Trading Standards on 0808 223 1133

There has been a spike in tool theft in the Thames

Valley area, including south Buckinghamshire, specifically targeting the property of tradesmen by breaking into vans.

This crime can be particularly harmful as it can have severe effects on businesses and livelihoods, due to loss of time, revenue and expenses to replace tools. Thieves are usually opportunists above all else and will take advantages of easy steals, so it is crucial it is not made convenient for them.

Lock your tools in a secure van, aim to vault bolt the tools to the floor of the van; remove them at night and store them in a safe place. Always lock your van and close your windows, possibly investing in a good quality alarm. If you do have an alarm, make sure it is always set and in working order.

Mark your tools by using ultraviolet pens and permanent markers and record your serial numbers and identifiable markings. You can register your tools on "Immobilise", which is the national property register and it is integrated into the police system. Security solution companies like Smartwater, SelectaDNA and datatag are very effective in helping you protect your property.

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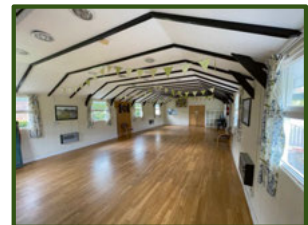
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# HUGHENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

by Stan Jones, Chairman, Hughenden Parish Council

The Parish Council has set its budget for the year from April 2024 to March 2025. The budget covers items that the Parish Council has a statutory duty to carry out, and some activities that it has the power to undertake beyond its duties. As parishioners will be aware, the Parish Council was effectively reformed almost two years ago inheriting many long-standing issues that had not been resolved during the Pandemic and a period of disruption affecting the Council itself. The Council has made great progress in bringing these issues to a resolution, and the current budget addresses the final two open issues; the potential renovation of the playgrounds at Great Kingshill and Templewood, and the restoration and management of many meadows, ponds and woods owned or leased by the Council (more on this below).



**HUGHENDEN  
PARISH  
COUNCIL**

In summary, the Parish Council is setting the local precept, or tax, at the same level as the past three years. For a Band D household the precept is £53.42. Different Parishes can be of very different sizes and shapes, with different demands, but it might be helpful to know that nearby Parishes such as Downley, Great Missenden, The Lee and Chenies had Precepts between £52 and £60 this year. Little Missenden and Little Marlow were between £65 and £70. Penn was a bit lower, Lane End was much higher. Hughenden is bang in the middle. We know a few residents would like the Parish to do less and reduce the Precept, and that others think we should be doing more - and better - without increasing the Precept. We would welcome new Councillors to join us and challenge the balance that we have struck, and believe is about right.

Among the long-standing issues that we have resolved are the land ownership dispute with Hughenden Community Support Trust, the repair and securing of vandalised speed monitoring equipment, adoption of the streetlights in Widmer End, the installation of secure gates at the Garden of Rest, the replacement of defective play equipment at Hughenden Valley Village Hall, the lease of the cricket pitch to Great Kingshill Cricket Club and the pruning or felling of a number of unsafe trees. In recent months the Parish Council has made grants to support the Ward newsletters and gazettes, a defibrillator at Hughenden Valley School, ongoing work at Bryants Bottom Community Trust and Grange Area Trust and resurfacing of the car park at the Village Hall at Hughenden Valley.

As mentioned above, we have budgeted for two substantial projects next year. The Council has long intended to refurbish the playgrounds at

Templewood in Walters Ash and Great Kingshill. Some Community engagement took place several years ago, but the high turnover of Clerks and administrative staff have

meant that this work has not been taken forward. The Council hopes to consider options and practical proposals for the playgrounds with a view to installing any approved facilities in Spring 2025.

The second large project is to develop Site Management Plans for the almost twenty sites around the Parish that the Parish Council is responsible for. Many of these sites have been neglected for ten or more years. The policy for managing them has not been reviewed for even longer. Some of the sites will have simple plans - to continue grazing, or use as sports or amenity fields. Others, such as Little Burnham meadow and spinney or Vincents Pond and meadow, are of considerable ecological value and require more imaginative and careful management. Our strategy is to feed these Plans into our next set of contracts for Grounds, Field and Hedge Maintenance in the Spring of 2025.

The Council has held reserves for these projects for several years. If plans are approved, reserves will be used to fund the work, and the reserves in our balance sheet will be drawn down. These projects are included in the budget, and some planning activity has been approved, but the main activities have not yet come to Council for approval.

Other than these projects, the budget reflects the ongoing maintenance of our allotments, Garden of Rest, open spaces, road safety and streetlights, as well as grants to local organisations. Staffing costs cover a Clerk (currently a part-time Locum), part time Deputy (currently advertised) and a Burial and Allotments Administrator, and part-time Responsible Financial Officer. We have two vital objectives for the coming months. We must stabilise the executive team, which has suffered high turnover, and which has been covered by several interim appointments. Councillors give direction to the Clerk and other officers, but it is they, not Councillors, who are the executives who carry out the work. A stable team is a prerequisite for a fully effective and efficient operation. A second priority, closely related to the first, is to improve our management of basic services like trimming hedges, clearing footpaths etc. We know that many residents are frustrated by slow turnarounds for this work. It is also the case that there is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for what. We need to address both issues. Improving these services goes hand in hand with establishing a stable administrative team.

[www.hughenden-pc.gov.uk](http://www.hughenden-pc.gov.uk)

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# DEMENTIA CAFE

by Trudi Scrivener

## *Volunteers Receive Essential Training*

In a significant leap toward promoting home care as a vital service to people living with dementia, Ashridge Home Care recently hosted a training session led by dementia expert and friend of Ashridge, Sally Blackden and thanks to Christine Symondson for letting us work around her dining table. This empowering event centred around a group of devoted volunteers in Speen, the vibrant heart of our monthly Dementia Café—an initiative proudly pioneered by Ashridge Home Care. As we underscore the pivotal role volunteers play in this initiative, we emphasise the importance of community-driven support for individuals grappling with dementia and their caregivers, paid or unpaid.

Our Dementia Café stands out as a unique resource that relies on the commitment of our volunteers. The café, which takes place every third Thursday of the month at Speen Chapel, serves as a vital hub offering emotional and practical assistance to those navigating the complex landscape of dementia. The success of this initiative hinges on the dedication of our volunteers, we are so grateful to them.

Sally Blackden, a respected trainer, shared a wealth of expertise with our volunteers, shedding light on the challenges and joys of supporting individuals with dementia. Her insights not only enriched our volunteers but also reignited their commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of those affected by dementia. Sally gave us lots of ideas about how to help a person with dementia remain content – a



favourite is her Dementia Cat – you can see in one of the photos! You won't believe the comfort a cat, albeit mechanical, purring on the lap of a person with dementia can bring.

The paramount importance of community involvement in dementia care cannot be overstated. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Dementia Café, creating a supportive space where individuals facing dementia can find understanding and a sense of belonging.

The whole team at Ashridge Home Care express our heartfelt gratitude to the volunteers and to Sally, the impact that community work can have on the lives of those touched by dementia is significant. Encouraging communities to prioritise empathy, understanding, and support, our monthly Dementia Café exemplifies the power of comprehensive home care for all. Join us every third Thursday as we build communities that promote the well-being of individuals and families impacted by dementia.

Our dementia café is held at Speen Chapel, Speen every third Thursday of the month between 10 and 12. We will serve you with coffee and cake and of course all welcome.

Please do contact me directly if you have any questions. Thank you.

**Trudi@ashridgehomecare.co.uk**



*Photos are of the Dementia Training Group and the Dementia Trainer with her cat.*

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# SAVE THE DATE

## July 13 2024

Planning is under way for the highlight of Speen's Summer Season, and this year we couldn't resist having the Paris Olympics as our theme.

The Fete team is a small, friendly group who meet monthly from February onwards. We would love to welcome new people to our cross-generation committee.

We are also keen to recruit volunteers to help on the day, for example setting up in the morning, running a side show, helping on the bar or selling

grand draw tickets, even for an hour or two.

Finally, if you are a small business and would like to advertise in our Program or donate a prize for the Grand Draw, please do let us know.

Last year we raised £2,700 for our village charities and organisations.



This year we are pleased to announce our chosen Charity of the Year, based in Stoke Mandeville

WheelPower is the national charity for wheelchair sports and for 75 years has been providing opportunities for disabled children and adults to play sport and stay active through their disability. In 2023 WheelPower helped over 72,000 disabled people access sport and physical activity through events and programmes across the country and at Stoke Mandeville Stadium.

**Clare Morris & Helen Davies**  
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# NORTHDEAN

by Christine Ryman

## *'Tis the Season to be Jolly*



A festive gathering took place last year in the beautifully decorated NDVH on 20th December, to unite us all with Christmas cheer! So many of us came together as the year drew to a close to sing traditional Christmas Carols and wish each other a joyful celebration over the festive season. Although not always in tune, we sung to our heart's content and our singing could be heard throughout the village! A fine

way to celebrate Christmas 2023.

May I also just say how absolutely stunning both villages looked throughout the festive season, all lit up in the night, each household so creatively adorned with outdoor Christmas lights and decorations throughout - it was magical! Such a special time of the year which warms my heart! For me, it is a feast for the eyes, so thank you for that!

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

by The Lumsden Family



each year. David died in 2018 and the family (plus a neighbour) all helped to put up about 30,000 lights and inflatables, in his memory.

Last year it was suggested to the family that they collect for charity and so they obtained a bucket from the Florence Nightingale Hospice who had taken such wonderful care of David in

When the Lumsden family moved to Studridge Lane, Speen in 2009, they continued the family tradition of putting Christmas lights up outside their house. Tessa's Dad, David Newell - semi retired and an engineer, felt that Ian needed help to set out a power network and they started extending the lights over time, more and more being added



his last months. The collection has been continued this year and it is hoped to make the display bigger and better next year so that the little ones in Speen (and the bigger ones) can all enjoy the show and contribute to a very good cause.

# SPEEN AT CHRISTMAS



## RECIPE

Recipe adapted from: Domestic Gothess

### *Fruit Cake Loaf*

This easy, everyday fruit cake is a simple, homely, old-fashioned cake. Eggless and dairy-free.

#### Ingredients

- 225 plain flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 115g vegan block butter
- 115g light brown soft sugar
- 300g mixed dried fruit
- 160 ml unsweetened non-dairy milk (I use soy)
- Demerara sugar for sprinkling

#### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C/150°C fan/325°F/gas mark 3. Grease a 2lb loaf tin and line it with baking parchment or use a disposable loaf liner.



2. Mix the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, mixed spice and cinnamon together in a large bowl.
3. Add the cold, cubed butter and rub it in using your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs and no lumps of fat remain.
4. Stir in the sugar and dried fruit.
5. Add the milk and mix to form a batter.
6. Scrape the batter into the tin and spread it level. Sprinkle with a handful of demerara sugar.
7. Bake for 60-70 minutes until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs but no wet batter. Be very careful not to over-bake the cake or it can become dry.
8. Leave to cool in the tin. Once cold store in an airtight container at room temperature.



# Speen Helping Hospices

Fundraising since 2001 for local hospices  
in Chiltern Villages

Helen & Douglas House for Children - Rennie Grove and Peace Hospice Care - South Bucks Hospice  
at Butterfly House - Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity

## Speen Helping Hospices -Raising Funds in Chilterns Villages Spring 2024

2023 was a challenging year for Speen Helping Hospices probably reflecting financial constraints as high interest rates and inflation hit people's discretionary spend. Selling tickets for events, that were traditionally very popular, was challenging and had it not been for the Golf Challenge at the beginning of 2023 our donations to the four hospices would have been considerably less. However, by drawing from our first event of 2024, the Quiz Night, we will now donate a total, of £18,000 that is £4,500 to each hospice leaving a small amount in balance to cover costs.

Many thanks to all of you who bought tickets, danced, quizzed, shopped, sang and ate at the events of 2023. This group initiative has been going for many years and we would hope to continue this with your support.

The Christmas Market raised £2,746 and the Christmas Hamper raffle £500. The carol singing in Speen raised £605 over two evenings, we had a fantastic group of carollers, by far the best ever, and they were warmly received at many doorsteps. Perfume sales including Tom Ford and Estee Lauder donated by the Brands Owners was over £3,000.

We are very grateful to the Thursday Studridge Social team Kate Vale, Kate Slade and Jo Thompson who raised £764 for SHH. They put in a huge amount of work making, baking and serving home-made soup, sourdough and a range of delicious cakes and scones in the Village Hall.

It was lovely to see so many Speen villagers at the first SHH pop-up pub night in the Village Hall for over a year enjoying the Christmas spirit. Amanda and the team did a fantastic job decorating the hall and the event provided an opportunity for people new to the village to meet villagers.

SHH would really welcome your engagement, that could be ideas for future fundraising events, a good contact that might help us at an event, donating a prize for a raffle or if you would like to get involved with SHH contact me grainnesuter@googlemail.com or 07778803260.

If anyone is thinking of taking part in a local fun run, bike race or other sponsorship event to help raise more for the local hospices via SHH please contact us.

## FUTURE EVENTS IN 2024

**Raffle for a Fourball Golf Voucher at Burnham Beeches Golf Club** worth £340. The draw is on the 20th April. Tickets are £5 and on sale at [http://www.shh-shop.org/Golf\\_giveaway\\_2024.htm](http://www.shh-shop.org/Golf_giveaway_2024.htm)

**For further information about all our events check out our website [www.shh-shop.org](http://www.shh-shop.org)**



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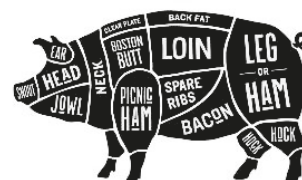
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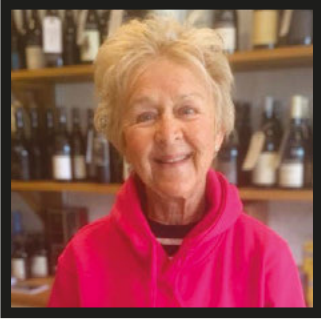


# INREMEMBERANCE

## Pam Peake

30th September 1946 – 13th October 2023

*The Peake family*



Pam and Stephen Peake came to Speen in 1978 and quickly became part of a wonderfully welcoming and supportive community with their growing family

of eventually three sons. Pam was born in Rochdale and she spent her early childhood in Malta – an early posting for her father who was in the Admiralty. In Malta, school finished at midday and afternoons were spent picnicking on the beach and swimming in the sea. A very happy childhood for Pam and her sister.

On returning to the UK the family first lived in Richmond Surrey, and Pam had happy years at Richmond Grammar School before leaving for Nottingham University where she met Stephen. He admits to being bowled over by a stunningly self-confident, assertive, 17 year-old psychology student who regularly danced into the night. His hope was that she might benefit from attachment to a boring bloke who might keep her out of trouble. And so it turned out.

Pam eventually graduated with a first-class degree and a doctorate in psychology; then, after they married, she became a Child Protection Social Worker in High Wycombe Social Services Department. There she made many friends including some who lived in Speen, which quickly became their aspirational hunting ground for a family home.

They moved initially into 1 Mynthurst View in Speen, and then, in 1983, further along the Hampden Road into Beeches. Their children had a wonderful education at Speen School, despite the rigidly enforced discipline, and being forced to drink milk at morning break! They also enjoyed their time at St John's School, Lacey Green, where one of them had restful interludes hiding in a stationary cupboard. From there the boys went to the Royal Grammar School, then off into the outside world.

Pam was a keen runner and an even more keen tennis player from those early days until the very end. Her main weapon at tennis was unfailingly getting the ball back despite the odds stacked against her by her all-male family. She was also able to hold her own in any family dispute by fair means or foul, including the judicious use of a wooden spoon on rear seated passengers on long journeys.

Speen has been a wonderful Peake family home for over 45 years, and all the family have great memories of Festivals, Fetes and Fun-Days as well as family countless gatherings, latterly with no less than 10 grandchildren who all love the village.

Pam's health declined quite steeply over her last year following a nasty fall downstairs. But even in her final months she was easily capable of keeping her family on the back foot with unexpectedly witty and disarming jibes where she felt it appropriate.

# COURNSVIEW HOUSE

*by Marion Bennet*

This picture shows the event that took place during the hot & dry summer months (in August to be precise). We were filling up the bird baths every day to keep the birds watered. We didn't think about other wildlife that couldn't reach the water! Unfortunately we had a number of rabbits that died and we presumed it was down to dehydration as they had no marks of being attacked. Putting them out on the back lawn seemed

the best option to at least feed the birds. A Red Kite soon appeared and it didn't take long for another to arrive and then a few Magpies came too, which, to my surprise, weren't scared of the Red Kites but were wary of them. As you can see from the picture, they are magnificent birds. The grass was completely brown by this time, but as soon as it rained, a lot of the grass, but not all, came back to life!



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# COURNSWOOD HOUSE

by Sharon Constançon

## *An Insight into its History*

Alfred Dillwyn "Dilly" Knox, an iconic British codebreaker, was born on July 23, 1884, in Upwood, England, a man who left an enduring impact on the world of cryptography and the outcome of many incidents in the two World Wars.

He was educated at prestigious institutions like Summer Fields School, Eton College, and King's College, Cambridge, where he studied classics, Knox's brilliance in mathematics and languages paved the way for a distinguished career in cryptanalysis.

During the First World War, Knox joined Room 40, the British Admiralty's code-breaking unit, gaining recognition for decrypting the Zimmermann Telegram bringing the US into the War.

His penchant for deep thinking, often in the bath at the end of the office corridor, became legendary. His colleagues, thinking he might have drowned, once broke down the door, interrupting his mathematical calculations.

In the Second World War, Knox's genius shone at Bletchley Park's Government Code and Cypher School, where he played a pivotal role in deciphering Axis powers' encrypted messages. His expertise in attacking Italian and Japanese codes and breaking the Enigma code significantly influenced key military operations.

Post the First World War, Knox continued making substantial contributions to cryptanalysis, solidifying his legacy.

"Dilwyn Knox... found that women had a greater aptitude for the work required - as well as nimbleness of mind and capacity for lateral thought, they possessed a care and attention to detail that many men might not have had." Knox had a very enlightened approach to the employment of women and was accused of being guilty of "positive discrimination".

Knox married Olive Roddam a fellow classicist, in 1920 and they moved in 1922 into Cournswood House, Clappins Lane. They had two sons, Oliver and Christopher. Christopher and his wife Joanna occupied Cournswood Cottage. Joanna remained in the Cottage until the property



was sold to Sharon Constançon in 2003.

Sharon's previous owners of Cournswood House, the Morgan's, recount the day they moved in, following an encounter with Christopher in the driveway – "We checked everything, we did all the due diligence on the house, but we missed checking the neighbours – David shared with Phyllis, his wife, that it should have been Christopher that was called Dilly, rather than his father!"

Dilly was involved in deciphering the text of the Herodas papyri. The Knox-Headlam edition of Herodas was published in 1922. This work, between the World Wars negatively impacted his eyesight, whilst showcasing his diverse intellectual pursuits.

Notably, Alan Turing, his own team of Dilly's fillies from Bletchley, and novelist, Agatha Christie, were among the visitors to Knox's home at Cournswood House.

He is known for his motorbike driving, from Cournswood to Bletchley and High Wycombe train station, earning on one occasion, a fine for reckless driving.

Knox, fourth of six children had a dry sense of humour and a penchant for unorthodox problem-solving.

Knox's life was cut short by lymphoma, but in the last years he continued his cryptographic work from his home, in the now study, in Cournswood House. He was awarded a CMG in these last years. His gravestone, an engraved rock, is in woodlands of the Knox Trust, in Clappins Lane, now up for sale.

He passed away on February 27, 1943.

***Dillwyn Knox's impact on the world of cryptography endures a testament to the brilliance and dedication of a man who played a crucial role in shaping the course of history through the art of code breaking.***



***Mavis Batey, one of "Dilly's girls", a female codebreaker who worked with him, authored a biography that was published in September 2009, immortalising Knox's contributions to the history of code breaking.***

# LIVING IN SPEEN

Jill Rogerson

**Two long-standing members of our village community talk about their life and their involvement in two local societies.**

## *David Clay*

David moved to Speen from Putney in 1975, four years after he married Sheila, when he started a new job as Administrator for Stoke Mandeville Hospital and several other associated hospitals. This required a house move and, visiting his first cousin, Nessa Cooney (who lived in Abbots Hill) one Sunday, he and Sheila spotted a For Sale notice outside Chiltern House, just up Chapel Hill. They bought it!

Their initial stay in Speen was from 1975 to 1984 during which their three daughters, Tanya, Kerri and Heather attended Speen School and St. John's School in Lacey Green. Needing more space, and also to accommodate David's mother, they moved to Lane Farm in Lacey Green where they lived until 2000. The family have happy memories of keeping pigs and poultry with the girls growing up and attending Wycombe High School. Their next move was to Aston Sandford, downsizing but with accommodation this time for Sheila's mother.

The time came when they decided to move back to Speen and in 2010 they bought Field End House from the Redrup's – the house had been built in 1954 by Don White and was his and Molly's first home.

David had retired in 1998 and he says that one of their main reasons for wishing to return to Speen was because of the friends they had made here many years before at the school gates, friendships



which exist to this day. In addition to socializing and travelling in their campervan and beyond (to Sydney in particular, to see family who have settled there), David is involved in a number of local activities and organisations. Key amongst these is Princes Risborough Rotary Club - David recalls how John Holmes approached him soon after they had moved to

Chiltern House and he joined Rotary with John, becoming a founder member, and subsequently President, Club Secretary and then Archivist (not all at the same time).

**Princes Risborough Rotary Club** meets every Monday evening, except the first Monday in the month when members meet for lunch; the venue is Whiteleaf Golf Club. In addition to a programme of talks and social events, David mentions some of the many fund-raising activities that Rotarians play a significant part in supporting (e.g. Kop Hill Climb, Charity Golf Days); financially supporting causes in the local area such as The Tree of Light, Young Carers, over 75's Christmas Lunch, the Princes Centre, funding playground equipment, individual hardship grants for students and Food Banks to name but a few.

The past 20 years have seen David sitting as parish councillor, taking part in (another John Holmes' inspired) walking group called Swallows, a discussion group called Guys Gathering and overseeing a number of refurbishments to their Speen home. After a worthwhile career as a senior manager in the NHS, David is enjoying his retirement to the full (and I haven't mentioned the bees!).

## *Loiz Bale*

Loiz and Stan Bale moved to Wayside, Speen, with their family in 1991 from Widmer End. Loiz was born and spent her very early years in the North East of England where her father worked in heavy engineering in Jarrow. Moving to London at the beginning of the war, the family settled in Pimlico in the 1950's where Loiz went to Buckingham Gate Central School.

Loiz talks about how lucky she was to have



opportunities and how grateful she was to her headmaster who steered her from a career as a shorthand/typist to furthering her education. Her father, a proud working-class man of the time, was not unsupportive of her aspirations, but said to her, in a bemused way "Why would you want to go into further education, you're only going to get married."

Always passionate about art, Loiz trained as a teacher at Trent Park Training College in Cockfosters.

Once qualified, she taught at Chelsea Central School for seven years from 1958, establishing the Arts Department. She reminisces about the immense satisfaction of taking a group of 'scallywags' (boys of course) to the Tate and watching the effect of them on seeing the wealth of artistic talent on display.

Loiz married Stan in 1961 and then the young family moved to Hazlemere in Buckinghamshire in 1965, where Loiz taught at Cedars County First School in from 1972 for 30 years.

After Stan's diagnosis of MS, he and Loiz became involved in creating a centre for MS cases in the locality. Loiz says it was quite a journey to set up but has proved over the past 40 years to have served the MS community in many and various ways. Based in Wendover, this has now evolved to become the Chilterns Neuro Centre offering a wide range of services and support for people with MS, Parkinson's and stroke survivors. Stan died in 2022 and the legacy he and Loiz have created will long be remembered by all who benefitted from their inspiration and optimism in the face of the difficulties they encountered.

When Stan retired from work following his diagnosis, Loiz retired from teaching and had more time to follow her passion for art. She began painting

again, visiting and contributing to exhibitions and in 1993 joined NADFAS (the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies), now The Arts Society.

The **Arts Society West Wycombe (TASWW)** met then in Bledlow and are now very settled in the Millenium Hall, Lacey Green, meeting once monthly on Wednesday mornings. Loiz says she could not believe her luck having access to a programme of 10 lectures each year delivered by excellent professional speakers, a Special Interest Day and Autumn Lunch, day and UK overnight trips and an annual extended foreign trip. She recalls lectures on many and varied subjects such as fashion, ceramics, theatre, architecture, sculpture, photography – particular favourites were a lecture by Antony Penrose, son of the war photographer Lee Miller and visits by Antique Roadshow veterans such as John Benhamin, Mark Hill, Eric Knowles and Joanna Hardy. Many magical moments!

Loiz was on the committee of TASWW for 12 years, spending a number of these as Programme Secretary, and **she was elected unanimously in Autumn 2023 as President.**



## LACEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

*Roger Craft and Philip Suter – Councillors*

The Parish Council installed "Community Speedwatch Area" signs in Chapel Hill and Hampden Road just before last Christmas. The objective is to remind drivers that they are in a residential area and to drive carefully and keep to the designated speed limit.

The one located on Chapel Hill near Speen Church also has one on the reverse that has been supplied by Hughenden Parish Council to remind drivers heading into North Dean that this is still a controlled speed zone. It is also located next to a double "roundel" – 30mph signage painted on the road in both directions again reminding drivers that it is 30mph in both directions.



Just before the school zone on the bend of Flowers Bottom Lane, up to last autumn there had been a third Speen village sign. Unfortunately it disappeared and only two posts remain. This is a very important location as the speed limit from the main Walters Ash to Lacey Green road is actually the national speed limit 60mph. This speed limit is the legal limit to just before the school where there are 30mph signs and a roundel painted on the road.

Buckinghamshire Council has ordered a replacement sign and has given permission for the Parish Council to erect a community Speedwatch sign on the posts below.

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You will be only 100m walk to the estuary where you can paddleboard or kayak.

With several sandy beaches just a short drive away you are perfectly situated to explore the north and south coasts. The nearest city is Truro which is approximately 10 minutes drive away and Falmouth is close too, offering some gorgeous sandy beaches and many fine restaurants. The King Harry Ferry which is 5 minutes away by car will take you across to the Roseland Peninsula where you can explore beautiful St Mawes and perhaps dine at the award winning restaurant The Idle Rocks. The unspoilt fishing village of Gorran Haven is great for families and to enjoy fish & chips on the beach.

# SPEENWI

by Corinne Symonds - speenwi@gmail.com

During the autumn and winter months our members have welcomed speakers on a variety of interesting topics. These have included the work of the war graves commission, the space race (very topical with NASA now scheduling Artemis for 2026) and the role of magistrates in the community.

We have also hosted some fun social events including a quiz at our Christmas meeting where members enjoyed hot punch and festive nibbles. For our anniversary in January, the committee prepared a four course dinner with fizz. Some of our members also enjoyed a fish and chip lunch at The Black Lion in Naphill in March.

At the December meeting, our president Pat Anderson presented a cheque for £300 to Marie Louise Morley, a trustee of the Ukraine to Chiltern charity. This sum was the proceeds from our monthly raffles for the year. Marie Louise provided a short update on the latest situation for those in our community fleeing the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The new programme of speakers for 2024-2025 has been finalised and shared with members. We can look forward to a diverse range of subjects including recycling, the KGB, and the work of the One Can Trust.



Members are off to see 'Calendar Girls - the musical' at the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury and the committee are busy planning further events and outings for the coming months.

We meet at 7.30 in Speen Village Hall on the first Thursday of the month. Do come along and enjoy a glass of wine whilst listening to an interesting talk-it's amazing what we learn! Activities are not just limited to Speen WI as we get the opportunity to participate at both local group and national levels. Visitors are always welcome and there is no obligation to join until you have given us a try. For details of future meetings and plans please refer to the Village Diary or the WI page on the village website. If you would like further information please contact speenwi@gmail.com.

## *Forthcoming Meetings*

**4th April:** Wallis Simpson and her King

**2nd May:** Warrior Women of The English Civil War  
Alternative venue as Village Hall is not available

**6th June:** Eco Printing

# SPEENVILLAGE HALL

by Adrian Farley, Acting Chair

In December of last year we said goodbye to Bill and Margaret Groves after they had been a key part of our village for many years. During one of the "pop-up" cafes we were able to acknowledge their many years' service to the village with a presentation and a small gift

Bill Groves had been involved with the Village Hall for around 25 years, during which time he made sure it has been a valuable village asset, kept in good repair and made available to all who want to use it. Over the years most of us have attended many great events in the Hall, from concerts and recitals, film nights, Christmas Fairs and regular pub nights, and for each of those we need to be grateful to Bill and Margaret Groves for making them possible.

The Village Hall, with its history as a Temperance Hall, is owned by all of us villagers and is available for events and activities for people both within and outside Speen. We have practical kitchen, music license and also dedicated parking. Over the years we have kept up the maintenance, and recently we have updated the

electrics and lighting – feel free to come and have a look sometime. Hiring can be done by contacting Sue Taylor on 01494 488500.

The Hall is managed by a small team, which now Bill has left is even smaller, so we need additional members to meet our requirements as a registered charity and to help run the place. Duties are not onerous, just occasional meetings and helping with regular maintenance, so if you want to join us and add to the vibrancy of village life please get in touch. Please contact me, or any of the team if interested and we can chat through what it entails.

Also, if there are suggestions of ways we could use the Hall, or adaptations that could increase its functionality please let us know. Local artists who wish to exhibit can display their artwork in the Hall.

This being our centenary year we will celebrate 100 years of ownership by the village, so please make use of it and help to keep it going for another 100 years!

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## *Vote Climate*

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2024 is likely to be an election year. It seems quite a momentous and important one due to the general state of things and the polling. Opinions will differ on this of course.

While this may feel like a national issue and not particularly local it might be helpful to recap over the environmental issues that surround us here. Firstly, we are living in an area of outstanding natural beauty and many people here take great care of their land and gardens – so we have so much to be grateful for and enjoy. But we have a great responsibility to ensure that things are both maintained and improved.

However, the state of the environment in this country generally is not at all promising and in recent years has got worse. Since SEAG began in 2019 and despite increased information about the climate crisis and biodiversity loss I suspect things are much the same or worse.

Our current UK climate policies do not align with the Paris Agreement our government signed in 2015 to limit global heating to 1.5C. The fifth carbon budget for 2028 -2032 will be 36% higher and this does not include the greenhouse gases produced by international aviation and shipping or the carbon emissions associated with the goods and services we import.

At the same time our rivers, chalk streams and seas are subject to pollution and contamination from industrial farming, fishing, industry, and roads. We learn that the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries on earth and so far, the international commitment to protect 30% of land and sea by 2030 has not been honoured. There is so much to be done.

There are two new online tools that have been released by The Climate Coalition and Climate Emergency UK. They can help you understand and check local data around nature and climate and find out more about popular concerns and other



activity in your constituency.

- Climate Scorecards for Councils: these score councils on a number of actions to take to get them to net zero, including planning, local transport and biodiversity: <https://climateemergency.uk/council-climate-scorecard/>

- The Local Intelligence Hub provides data about local MPs, constituencies, public opinion and the climate and nature movement: <https://www.localintelligencehub.com/>

In any election we can select the candidate or political party whose manifesto will best serve the environment. There are several campaigns that are now in existence to help us to do this. This one is supported by Chris Packham <https://voteclimate.uk>

We in Speen will be in the Mid Buckinghamshire constituency and not Aylesbury as before.

Based on current opinion polls you can see the projected results in our area. The aim of [voteclimate.uk](https://voteclimate.uk) and other similar schemes is to alert people to whichever political party has the best climate and biodiversity policies and give advice about what would be the most helpful vote in their area.

<https://voteclimate.uk/constituencies/mid-buckinghamshire>

Greenpeace have something similar Project Climate Vote – they are recruiting volunteers to go out house to house talking to people about climate change and asking them to sign up to receive information about their prospective candidates in the next general election and their climate policies.

[www.greenpeace.org.uk](https://www.greenpeace.org.uk)

Whatever your opinion this is our golden opportunity to get effective action to cut carbon emissions and take better care of our natural environment. Please do your research.

**SEAG asked Shaun Butler, our local Home Energy expert, to give us all an update on his work as it is now over a year since our Home Energy Event.**

## *What's going on in the green revolution?*

Well, starting as close to home as possible, and to the annoyance of my family, our home has been turned into a test bed for every new solar panel, battery and energy saving gadget imaginable (and perhaps a few that haven't been imagined yet). In fact, the kids have been banned from the garage, as it resembles Doc Brown's lab from "Back to the Future" and multiple dinner parties have occurred to the backdrop of solar panels leaning up against the dining table - yes, this is indeed a revolution in the making, but it's a quiet, comfortable revolution and probably a sign of things to come.

Over the last year or two I've been beavering my way through people's energy bills and designing the perfect system to take advantage of these new and fantastic technologies and I've done enough now to have confidence in the changes that are possible. Quite a few homes in the village have swapped their old boiler for a heat pump, taking advantage of a £7500 government grant which pays for most of the installation and no longer need deliveries of fuel. Some have got their first electric car, with lower running costs and the pace of uptake is increasing as people realise it's no longer a sacrifice to go 'green' but a worthy upgrade to their quality of life.

It's easy to see the gradual roll out of solar panels and electric cars just look out for the green badge on the number plates, but a steadily increasing secret minority have batteries hidden away in their homes, quietly eating away at that energy bill.

While the trend in cars is in the direction from petrol/diesel to hybrid and now to fully electric, the trend from gas/oil heating is moving in the direction of heat pumps. The trend of power coming from the grid is changing to solar power and now into battery energy storage. In fact, half of the work I have done in the last six months is simply installing batteries in homes.

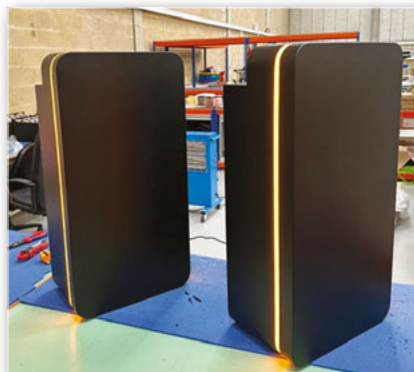
Surprisingly, solar is not the best option. If you had to pick a technology, the home battery is proving to be the best investment for most people. Almost every week I have someone send me their electricity bill showing the vast drop in cost from last year to this year, as much as 80% for some. This has spurred me on to do something about the main disadvantage, the cost. Even with the governments removal of VAT from home energy batteries on the 1st of February, this year the average installation is over £10,000.

The cost is made up of the raw materials to make such a system, manufacturing, the expertise to install

it and all the regulatory requirements of connecting with and working with the national grid. To make meaningful change, the cost of accessing the technologies needs to come down, the installation needs to be as effortless as buying something on Amazon and the general understanding of these dark arts needs improvement.

To do something about the costs, and produce a really nice experience, I have worked out all the kinks, learnt from all the mistakes people make and come up with a bigger, nicer and I think importantly, a British Battery. Its designed right here in Speen and it is manufactured in Essex and Reading. Our house has been running on the new batteries since December and in a few weeks' time 16 of them will be connected to make an off-grid community in Oxford. It is equal parts exciting, scary, tiring and somehow energising (if that possible). The ability to store lots of electricity is at the core of everything we want in the future, clean, green, comfortable, and cheap energy.

I've got a long way to go to complete the ecosystem of technologies, and with the help of many people in the village offering advice, mentorship and trusting me enough to help with their home upgrades, I know it's going to have an impact. Even if the outcome is to disrupt the current energy system and show another way to power our future, it will be worth the risk.



This is product number one; you saw it here first. It combines cost saving, local manufacturing and rapid development with the best

battery chemistry and safety. It should last decades and pay for itself many times over. It's sized so that a family home can run for a day on just one of them and a home with a heat pump needs two. Particular attention has gone into the installation as it needs to be light enough to move and quick to install, a big problem with the current offerings on the market.

The larger task we all face is who has the skills to roll out these complicated technologies in a way that makes the return on the investment as quick as possible without compromising on the standards we are used to. There is much to be done before we can move on from the fossil fuel era, but the signs of what is to come are clearer and closer than ever.

If you would like any more information I can be contacted by email: [shaun@gosupercharged.com](mailto:shaun@gosupercharged.com) and 07540 635024.

Shaun Butler, Supercharged Ltd

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## Lessons from the Season of Spring

*Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being.*

Romans 1:20 (The Message Bible)



Springtime is one of my favourite seasons of the year. Everything is fresh, new, and in bloom. So, after a long winter how can you not enjoy the warm temperatures and the bright sunshine.

Changing seasons can teach us spiritual lessons. So, what are the spiritual lessons to be learned from the changing seasons, and the arrival of springtime?

As we were driving this last week and seeing all the blooming trees and flowers, my wife said to me that we can often forget what a beautiful part of the country that we live in. That is absolutely true. During the spring everything looks fresh and new. That newness reminds me of Lamentations 3:22,23 "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning." God's mercy and love is new every morning, it is never used up or spent. What a wonderful promise to store up in your heart and your mind as you see the newness of spring all around.

Another lesson that we need to learn from the changing seasons is that God is a faithful God. We take it for granted that spring follows winter, summer follows spring, etc... What have we done to bring about this change in seasons? Absolutely nothing! God has done it without any of our aid or help. Yet while we sleep and wake, day after day God has been faithfully caring for his earth – upholding it while it makes its yearly revolution around the sun. The earth never speeds up; it doesn't slow down; it doesn't veer off course. Rather it consistently rotates day after day while revolving around the sun. Why? Because God by the power of His might keeps it directly on course. So perfectly in fact that each season comes in due course. That is none other than the perfect faithfulness of our God.

These and many other lessons can be learned from God's creation all around us. May we have the eyes to see God and apply the lessons of nature to our hearts and minds.

Happy spring everyone!

Speen Baptist Church

## DARVILLS HILL FARM

Charlotte Downing

### *A word on flerds @darvills\_hill\_farm*

For the past four years our small family farm, at the far end of Flowers Bottom Lane, has been home to a flock of mixed rare breed ewes, their lambs and our two Soay rams Chesyne (the One and Only) and more recently Ken Enough. Our ambition however has always been to bring cattle back onto the farm and finally, having installed all the necessary infrastructure in the way of fencing, gates, water and cattle crush (a medieval looking but necessary animal handling system), we are ready to welcome a handful of bovine boys.

I wasn't entirely confident about what we would get if I mixed our flock of sheep with a herd of cows, but I was reassured by You Tube sensation and relentlessly optimistic regenerative Missouri farmer Greg Judy, that it is something called a 'flerd'.

This word was only recently added to the Oxford English dictionary but it describes a process that has been around for millennia, and for as long as grassland habitats have been in existence. In the wild, diverse



varieties of herbivores form a cohesive unit grazing and moving together, to keep safe from predators. When animals were domesticated, they were still grazed together as farmers instinctively understood that cattle and sheep have different grazing methods which are not only compatible, but positively enhance the biodiversity in the soil and pastures on which they are kept.

This traditional knowledge has got a little lost in recent decades in the race to intensify agriculture, however it is becoming more commonplace again. Our ambition to work with nature, creating more space for diversity on the farm means we are well placed to undertake this form of pastoralism. Our cattle will be a slow growing, hardy breed as they will be living outdoors on pasture all year round, just as nature intended. Once our ewes have finished lambing this May, we will slowly be introducing them to their ruminant relatives. I'm now wondering what you get if you mix a brood of chickens with a flerd? Answers on a postcard please.

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# SPEENBONFIRE 2023

The annual Speen Bonfire Event on 4th November went off well again making a very substantial four figure profit for the Playing Field coffers. This year the waste timber content of the bonfire was again reduced to minimise any environmental damage and a further significant donation has subsequently been approved and paid to the Woodland Trust, to pay for tree planting elsewhere to offset any impact of the event.



Reg Horne, a relatively new village resident with former RAF connections, emailed to say that he thought it "was a marvellous tribute to the Dambusters."

*"Lesley & I would like to say how blown away we were by the Speen fireworks and the Lancaster plane,*

*the Mohne Dam and the organisation.*

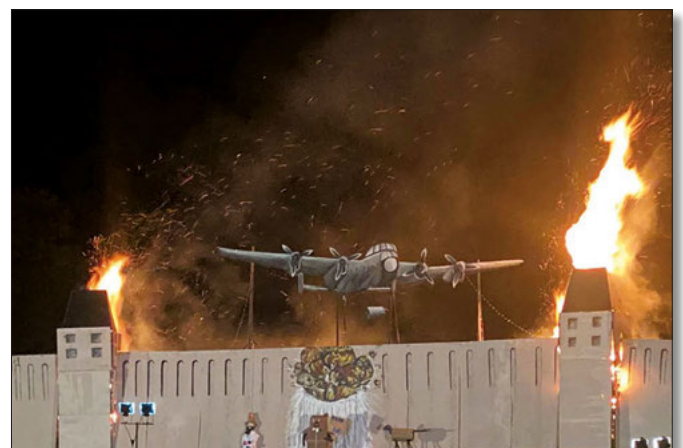
*My father died in 2016 at the age of 95, he was a flight engineer with an Australian squadron successfully completing 30 sorties over Germany. His ashes were scattered at RAF Binbrook.*

*We lived in Germany in the 1980s and were stationed at RAF Gutersloh, a short journey to the Mohne where we took our guests frequently.*

*Thank you once again for a marvellous effort and we are already looking forward to next year's theme. All the best. Reg"*



Some six hundred villagers and guests from further afield attended the Dambusters theme event. This sought to recognise the bravery, sacrifice and ingenuity behind Operation Chastise on the 80th anniversary of the operation, which became known as the "Dambusters Raid" of May 1943. Committee members spent many days collecting the necessary timber. We then assembled our recreation of the Mohne Dam, in the Ruhr, in Germany together with a model of a Lancaster bomber dropping the famous bouncing bomb, designed by Barnes Wallis. The successful operation helped to shorten the war and ensure our freedoms.



*Greg Cook also sent images of the fire and the plane to members of the current crew of our last Lancaster bomber, who carried out the fly past over the village earlier in the year. Their response was ...."Awesome"!*

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# WILDLIFEWATCH

Peter Symonds

The winter period often sees some interesting wildlife records and this year is no exception.

The best record of the period came from Dan Dunford whose wife Mel had photographed a Woodcock right next to the back door of their house, in Grubbins Lane. Woodcock are normally shy, secretive and predominantly nocturnal birds. The majority of the woodcock we now see are migrant birds which arrive here for the winter period. My normal records tend to be of birds that I have accidentally flushed whilst walking in woodland. Their camouflage is extremely effective blending perfectly into the woodland floor. It is, therefore, highly unusual for one to be seen right next to a house and allow itself to be photographed at close range. This raises the question of whether it had possibly stunned itself by flying into a window. In any event it apparently flew off down the garden at a later stage. (See Mel's photo below)



In addition to the usual redwings and fieldfares that have been visiting gardens in the village this year has also seen an eruption of Waxwings from Scandinavia. Eruptions occur every ten years or so when berries are in short supply on the continent. A large flock of up to 75 birds of these attractive birds was present in the middle of a housing estate in Hazlemere during January with smaller flocks reported from Longwick and Latimer. In the woods around Hampden House flocks of up to 40-50 Crossbills and 30 Siskin have been recorded during the winter. Hawfinches which regularly visit hornbeams in a copse near Hampden House were also recorded with a maximum of 11 birds in November.

More unusual records include a pair of Ring-necked Parakeets flying over the village on 20th October and a Firecrest in Hughenden in January. Since the beginning of the new year with relatively mild conditions prevailing some local birds have started nest building and egg laying quite early. Red kites were seen rebuilding an old nest on 5th January and regularly since that date whilst Mallard have been busy laying eggs in our back garden well before the end of February. Mallard have also been seen regularly on Studridge Lane

pond where the water level has remained at a very high level. This high level has meant that planned maintenance work has had to be delayed until later in the year.

Small groups of roe deer have been noted in various areas around the village. Jude



Awdry kindly sent in a photograph of a handsome young buck that made several early morning visits to their front garden in Coleheath Bottom. The planning application on the pub has confirmed some interesting wildlife records. The bat emergence report of November 2023 confirmed the

presence of resident pipistrelle bats in the roof of the main building but the survey also recorded Barbestrelle, Noctule and Brown long-eared bats in the vicinity as well as an active badger sett under part of the building.

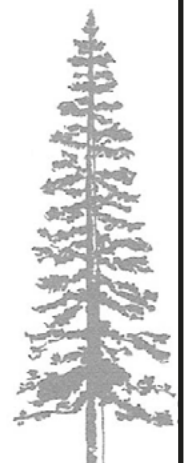
Please report interesting sightings -  
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# WHO'S WHO

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North Dean Village Hall - Bookings	Jeremy Mudie	07880 785 983
North Dean Village Fete	Dick Pooley	01494 269 615
One Can Food Bank Trust - Trustee	Graham Peart	01494 488 327
Pigotts 7'48' Musical Evenings	Jeremy Hamilton	07834 224 589
Speen Good Neighbours	Pat Richardson	01494 488 627
Speen & North Dean Guides	Pauline Hall	01494 488 372
Speen & North Dean News - Chairman	Jill Rogerson	01494 488 315
Speen & North Dean News - Advertising	Tom Dent	01494 488 943
Speen & North Dean Toddlers	Sandy Mitcheson	07747 635 974
Speen Baptist Church - Pastor	Rev. Tim Deller	01494 488 753
Speen Environmental Action Group (SEAG)	Jane Farley	07889 433 630
Speen Festival	Cat Cook	07917 775 115
Speen Fete - Chair	Clare Morris/Helen Davies	01494 488 553
Speen Helping Hospices - Secretary	Maureen Laing	01494 488 397
Speen Heritage Group - Chairman	Peter Symonds	01494 488 016
Speen Marquee	Greg Cook	07917 775 116
Speen Playing Fields	Tony Bobroff/Matt Davies	07768 330 273
Speen C of E Infant School - Head	Lisa Davies	01494 488 321
Speen School PTA - Co-Secretary	Charlie Harrison	07772 562 979
Speen Stores	Ruban Kantharuban	01494 488 258
Speen Tennis Court - Secretary	Philippa Lane	01494 488 453
Speen Village Hall - Bookings	Sue Taylor	01494 488 500
Speen Village Hall - Acting Chairman	Adrian Farley	01494 488 749
Speen WI - Secretary	Jenny Pearce	01494 562 333
St John's Parish Church	Revd Tony Bundock	01844 347 741

## LACEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Councillors for Speen	Roger Craft	r.craft@laceygreen-pc.org.uk
	Philip Suter	p.suter@laceygreen-pc.org.uk

## HUGHENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Councillors for North Dean	Simon Kearey	Simon.kearey@hughendenpc.org.uk
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## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Councillors for Speen	Carl Etholen	Carl.Etholen@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
	Shade Adoh	Shade.Adoh@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
	Robert Carington	Robert.Carington@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Councillors for North Dean	Steve Broadbent	Steve.Broadbent@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
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