

THE SPEEN & NORTH DEAN *News*



Summer 2026

Issue 96



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Welcome!

to the Summer Edition

Well, no one can say we have not had much of a summer this year! Despite the numerous heatwaves, we have managed to get out and about and make the most of the long days and balmy evenings.

To everyone who submitted photos, wrote articles and organised events over the summer, a huge thank you. You are what makes our two villages far more than just a spot on the map.

In this issue, we're celebrating everything that makes our villages thrive during the warmer months.

So, pour yourself a cold drink, find a shady spot in the garden, sit back and relax and enjoy this summer's collection of local stories and a roundup of events.

Stay cool!

Best Wishes

Jill Roberts

*Front Cover Photo
Afternoon Tea at Speen Helping Hospices
25th Anniversary Garden Party. Photo by Ceri Syner*

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SPEEN & NORTH DEAN NEWS COMMITTEE

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

Next Edition

Copy for the next edition is due by Friday 20th November 2026 with a planned publication date of early December. Please send photos separately from text, together with captions and a consent form (downloaded from the SNDN website www.speenbucks.org.uk) if any photos are of children. Please send to 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 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 Baptist Church Administrator Sandy Mitcheson 01494 488 875
Tuesdays Term Time Only	Speen & North Dean Tiddlers & Toddlers	Speen Chapel Hall 9.30am - 11.30am	speen-northdeantoddlers@gmail.com
3rd Thursday of each month	Memory Cafe	Speen Chapel Hall 10.00am - 12.00pm	trudi@ashridgehomecare.co.uk
1st & 3rd Sundays	BCP Holy Communion	St John's Parish Church, Lacey Green 8.00am	stjohnschurchlaceygreen@gmail.com
Tuesdays	Said Communion (Common Worship)	St John's Parish Church, Lacey Green 9.30am	
Sundays (1st Sunday All Ages)	Parish Communion with Hymns	St John's Parish Church, Lacey Green 10.00am	

AUGUST

Thurs 20th	Memory Cafe	Speen Chapel Hall 10:00am - 12:00pm	trudi@ashridgehomecare.co.uk
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SEPTEMBER

Thurs 3rd	Speen WI Working for Auntie	Speen Village Hall 7:30pm	Jenny Pearce 07035188093
Thurs 17th	Memory Cafe	Speen Chapel Hall 10:00am - 12:00pm	trudi@ashridgehomecare.co.uk
Sat 26th	SHH Comedy Night	Lacey Green Village Hall Bar open 7pm	Tickets SHH Website

OCTOBER

Thurs 1st	Speen WI Film Night	Speen Village Hall 7:30pm	Jenny Pearce 07035188093
Wed 7th	Ladies Autumn Lunch	The Horses Trust	SHH Website
Wed 14th	Bridge Afternoon	North Dean Village Hall	SHH Website
Thurs 15th	Memory Cafe	Speen Chapel Hall 10:00am - 12:00pm	trudi@ashridgehomecare.co.uk

NOVEMBER

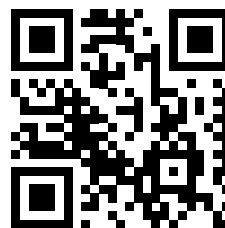
Thurs 19th	Memory Cafe	Speen Chapel Hall 10:00am - 12:00pm	trudi@ashridgehomecare.co.uk
Sat 21st	SHH Annual Christmas Market	Speen Baptist Church Hall	SHH Website

SPEENHELPING HOSPICES



Charity Comedy Night at Lacey Green on **Saturday 26th September**. Organised by local resident Elliot Wengler of Select Comedy, this year's show will be headlined by Ria Lina and will also feature Chris Norton Walker, Andy Gleeks and Sally Firth, and Elliot as MC. Tickets are £20 each, and the Box Office is now open.

TICKETS AVAILABLE USING THE QR CODE BELOW



Further details on Page 14

SPEEN SCHOOL & LITTLE APPLES PRESCHOOL

Lisa Davies



As another busy and successful school year draws to a close, everyone at Speen School has been reflecting on a fantastic term filled with learning, exciting experiences and opportunities for our children to live out our school values of Family, Caring, Honesty, Courage, Respect and Responsibility.

One of the highlights of the term was our whole-school Colour Run, which brought together pupils, families and staff for a wonderfully colourful afternoon. The event not only provided plenty of laughter and colourful memories but also raised valuable funds for Agape School in India. Our children were proud to support the education of children across the world, demonstrating kindness, generosity and an understanding of the importance of helping others.

Our Eco Council has also been busy organising a collection of second-hand clothes for recycling. This initiative encouraged everyone to think carefully about reducing waste and protecting our environment. We are incredibly proud that, thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of our pupils, Speen School has once again been awarded the Eco-Schools Green Flag with

Distinction. This achievement reflects our ongoing commitment to sustainability and caring for the world around us.

At Speen School, we believe children should have a voice in shaping their learning experiences. When asked which sporting workshops they would most like to take part in, they enthusiastically

chose cricket and a circus skills workshop. Both activities proved to be enormous fun, with children taking on new challenges and developing new skills.

Our younger pupils have enjoyed some wonderful educational visits this term. Little Apples Preschool and Reception spent a memorable day at Whipsnade Zoo, where the highlight for many was seeing the much-loved baby elephant. The visit sparked curiosity and supported their learning about animals and their habitats.

Bramley Class travelled to Didcot Railway Centre to enhance their history topic on the development of trains. Exploring the historic locomotives and travelling through railway history brought their classroom learning to life and helped deepen their understanding of how transport has changed over time.

One highly inspiring moment of the term was





welcoming the New Mozart Orchestra to Speen School. The orchestra performed a fantastic concert for the whole school, introducing children to the excitement of live orchestral music. Bramley Class also enjoyed a special violin workshop, where they had the opportunity to learn from professional musicians and even try playing the instruments themselves. It was an unforgettable experience that inspired many budding young musicians.

Learning beyond the classroom has remained a key part of school life throughout the year, with children taking part in a wide range of outdoor learning opportunities and environmental projects. These



experiences have helped develop confidence, curiosity and an appreciation of the natural world while encouraging children to become responsible and active members of their community.

As we reach the end of another year, we would like to thank our families, volunteers and the wider community

for their continued support. The achievements of our pupils this year are a reflection of the strong partnership between home and school, and we are incredibly proud of everything they have accomplished. We wish everyone a safe and happy summer and look forward to another exciting year at Speen School.

SPEEN SCHOOL PTA

by Dishan Popat Chair Speen School PTA

Speen School PTA Rounds Off a Fantastic Summer Term and Academic Year

Following a hugely successful Winter & Spring term, the Speen School PTA has ended the academic year in style, raising an impressive £7,121 through a brilliant range of events that brought the whole school community together for one last push before the summer holidays.

This year funds were raised through a fantastic variety of events, including MUFTI and the Valentine's School Disco, the Smarties Challenge, World Book Day celebrations with a Cake Bake Sale, Red Nose Day MUFTI and Cake Sale, the Easter Bonnet Competition, Frozen Fridays after school, the Sports Day BBQ, and the always-popular Speen Fete. These events not only generated valuable funds but also created memorable moments for children and families throughout the term. The PTA would like to thank everyone who attended, volunteered, or supported the events in any way.

With over £7,000 raised, and additional funds carried over from last year, the PTA has spent over £11,000 supporting projects that directly benefit the children. Alongside the popular new Outdoor

Classroom, there has been a huge support across additional books, an Introception Day, Zoolab, Story Explorer, and new play equipment, each helping to enrich learning, wellbeing and playtime experiences for every child at Speen.

PTA Chair Dishan said:

"It has been such a pleasure to join the PTA this year and to see, first-hand, just how much we can achieve when we all pull together. From the school disco to the parents social quiz, to the Christmas and Speen Fete, every single event has been made possible by the time, energy and generosity of our school community. I've loved every minute of it."

The PTA would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported this year's events, whether by volunteering time, attending, or helping with fundraising in any way, along with the school's teachers and staff for their continued support, and the dedicated PTA committee and class representatives whose enthusiasm and hard work have made this such a successful year.



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SPEENFETE

by Lucy Johnston

The 65th Speen Fete took place on 11th July, with over 400 visitors turning out to support our village organisations. Amid the World Cup excitement, this year's theme, **'Kicking Around the World'**, celebrated nations across the globe and, of course, a little bit of football!

The stalls looked fantastic, flying flags from different countries. Congratulations to Giorgio Pisani, who correctly identified every flag! Alongside our usual sideshow favourites, we enjoyed some fantastic performances from the All-Access Drama students. This included our very own **Speen Cheer** team, who rehearsed and performed a routine they had learned in just two sessions. We were also treated to musical interludes from the Hemley Hillbillies, who would like to pass on their thanks to everyone who donated towards their fundraising for Parkinson's UK. There were some wonderful costumes in our

fancy dress parade, with Henry Nicholls taking the top prize for his Around the World in 80 Days-inspired outfit.

The fete committee would like to say a huge thank you to Jenny Pearce, who is stepping down from running our Teddy Tombola. One of the fete's most popular stalls, Jenny must have collected and washed thousands of teddy bears during her time with the Fete!

Finally, thank you to everyone who supported this year's event. Together, we have raised much-needed funds for our Charity of the Year, Speen Village Hall, as well as other village organisations.

Planning for the 2027 Speen Fete will begin in November. If you would like to get involved, we would love to hear from you! Contact Lucy Johnston 07770868029





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SPEENCHURCH

I wonder if I might introduce myself, my name is Sue Leach, and I am a member at Speen Baptist Church. I am a tad under 4' 9", just about top tip into the wrong side of seventy, have a husband, a daughter, a son and three lovely grandchildren.

I have been asked to write 'a piece' for the magazine and well to be honest I am a little overwhelmed by the prospect, but here goes.

Oh, and did I mention that I am a Christian?

Hmm...an interesting word, but what exactly is a Christian?

People's perception of Christians is often that they are 'do gooders', people who should have a better code of behaviour than most, and are 'religious', but that does not describe a Christian at all.

You see a Christian is someone who KNOWS that all people are the created beings of the Perfect, Holy Creator God, and anything that we think or do of ourselves next to the perfection of God, well, is as rubbish. Despite that, a Christian knows that God loves them with a passion. In fact, He loves all mankind with a passion, wanting what is best for us all, which is to be in relationship with Himself, Father, and child together. That is where Jesus comes in, the man of God who is human and also God, thus He and He alone was able to die for

humankind, whilst at the same time be acceptable to God. By believing in, trusting in and Knowing the Living Jesus, we can know our Father, who is God, personally.

Then as we walk closer in that relationship, being guided, taught, and influenced by our perfect Father through His Son Jesus, we Christians, just might find ourselves reflecting His perfect character in us, as we walk along life's journey.

And as for the religious bit, I find myself seeing a large difference between religious practices and faith. Religious practices rely on our ability or discipline to master them or keep them. But Faith means to completely entrust oneself to someone, having complete confidence in the one to whom we trust. For a Christian that is Jesus Christ. We entrust ourselves to Jesus completely, not by religious practices, but by personally knowing Him, and walking in close friendship with Him, and I can say with certainty that there is no better friend to have.

Worthy are You, O Lord and our God, to receive glory, honour, and power, For You did create all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created.

Revelation 4:11

speenchurch.org

SPEENBRIDGE CLUB

New Members are Welcome Here

We are looking for new members. If you are interested, please contact Alan Clark on 01494 488371 or at jopippa@btinternet.com.

We play every Monday in Speen Village Hall at 13.30.

We are not a group for beginners; some knowledge of bidding conventions is required.

However we are not serious players like some bridge clubs and we play our games in a very relaxed and friendly way"

We play 16 hands of Duplicate Bridge, and we draw for partners each week.

We stop for tea and biscuits after 8 hands. There is a £3 charge when you play.

Each week members are invited to say if they want to play next week. No need to commit to playing every week.

We would like to be a diverse group and invite players of all backgrounds and from all nearby areas. We currently have players from Hughenden Valley (that's nearly High Wycombe), Widmer End, Lacey Green, darkest Prestwood and Princes Risborough (outside the Chilterns!)

As the hangman Boris in Blazing Saddles said as he was about to hang a rider and his horse 'All are welcome here'. No need to bring a horse, we've got plenty in Speen.



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ST JOHN'S CHURCH

Our New Kitchen!!

We are very pleased to share that we have had a small, discreet, but practical kitchen area added to the social chapel at St John's Church. Over the years we have enjoyed a growing reputation for our Tea and homemade cake events, and the kitchen will make life so much easier. Ken and June are serving tea and coffee after the 10am Service on a Sunday.



St John's Church Services

We are very sorry to say goodbye to Canon Tony, who has retired after a 12-year ministry with St John's Church. The weekly services at St John's will be running as usual until we welcome our new Vicar.

AUTUMN EXTRAVAGANZA

Saturday October 10th

St Johns School Hall 2pm – 4pm

£7 for 1 child • £13 for 2 (over 1 year) • £16 for 3 in same family
Over 11 years welcome as helper • Parents free

A great variety of craft tables for all ages

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Refreshments provided

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SHH - Raising Funds in Chilterns Villages for 25 Years

by Gráinne Suter, Chair SHH

Since the spring edition of Speen & North Dean News, SHH has continued to celebrate its 25th anniversary with several fundraising events.

We held a pub night in April and a Ladies Spring Lunch at The Horse Trust in May. We also launched our 25th Anniversary Recipe Book that you can buy at our events throughout 2026 and via our website. All recipes are well tested and pretty foolproof!

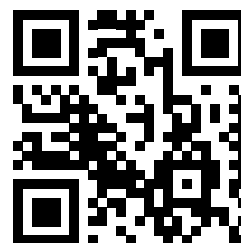
The metal detectorists Martin Radvan and Paul Trendall, accompanied by Martin's Border Terrier Poppy, fascinated their audience with a brilliant talk on their many finds around Speen. We had a packed house and many calls for a return visit, So, watch this space.

On the 5th July we held our 25th Anniversary celebration luxury afternoon tea in the gardens of Willotts Farm. It was a hot afternoon however, the garden had lots of shade under the trees that kept the 58 guests cool ably assisted by chilled prosecco and rosé!

Once again, the **SHH Committee** has been supporting the community helping at other events. The Horse Trust was celebrating 140 years at the end of June and held a family fun day. On the 11th July we ran the Children's Books, Plants Flowers and Preserves store at Speen Fete. **Hildreths Garden Centre** once again donated a large selection of plants.

Our next major fundraising event is a **Charity Comedy Night at Lacey Green on Saturday 26th September**. Organised by local resident Elliot Wengler of Select Comedy, this year's show will be headlined by Ria Lina and will also feature Chris Norton Walker, Andy Gleeks and Sally Firth, and Elliot as MC. Tickets are £20 each, and the Box Office is now open. As with all SHH events, there are no additional card processing fees. Speenies and North Deanies, we would love to see lots of you enjoying a night out in Lacey Green. It's not too far away!

Tickets can be purchased by using the QR code below.



Dates for your diary

7th October

the second SHH Ladies Autumn Lunch
at The Horse Trust

14th October

Annual Bridge Afternoon with tea
at North Dean Village Hall

21st November

Annual Christmas Market
at Speen Church from 11am to 4pm.

Details of all our events can be found at our website www.shh-shop.org You can also follow us on Instagram and Facebook.

Expanding the fundraising activities: This is where you might be able to help or know of someone who can support us.

If you are planning or considering taking part in a sporting event or other event, would you help others by fundraising for SHH in the Chiltern Villages. Maybe you are involved with a local cricket or football team or play tennis and could be interested in organising a match this year. You might also consider a fun run, half marathon or a bike race.

We, at SHH 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.

Please contact me at events@shh-shop.org

SPEEN & RISBOROUGH COMMUNITY BUS

by Peter Johnson

A while ago I wrote on Speen WhatsApp group that the service to Princes Risborough on Tuesdays by Risborough Area Community Bus was in danger of being cancelled because of low passenger numbers.

Some judicious lobbying has helped that threat to recede although it is likely that the service will be just two runs in the morning and the current afternoon run will be cancelled.

But, and it is a big but, low usage will continue to threaten continuity of the service, and the danger has not fully gone away.

As a reminder, the bus leaves the George & Dragon bus stop in Risborough High Steet at 08.45 on Tuesdays running up the Hampden Road around 08.55. It then drives around Studridge Lane, arriving back on Hampden Road at the KW4 around 09.00. It then wends its way back to Risborough via Bledlow Ridge arriving at the George & Dragon at 09.30. The same route is repeated leaving the George and Dragon at 11.40, arriving in Speen around 11.55.

So, what is there to do in Princes Risborough for over



two hours? Well apart from shopping, and there is lots of room on the bus for shopping bags or shopping trolleys, there is a plethora of cafés in around the High Street plus the lively Crew Cafe at the Community Centre in Stratton Road. The new favourite is Moc &

More in the High Street which since opening earlier this year has become very popular.

Chaps are spoiled for sartorial choice by at least four barbers shops and the ladies can enjoy two high quality hair salons. Charity shops abound, the butchers at the top of the High Street is top quality and the new restaurant @39 opposite the Cross Keys surgery is a real hit, offering delicious meals from 10.00 in the morning.

In Spring and Autumn in particular the scenery on the ride to and from Risborough is truly spectacular and for those mature souls sporting a bus pass it is all free!

So do please come along and make full use of the bus so that growing numbers guarantee the service's future.

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Would you know **what to do if someone needed CPR?** Back in April, Laura Sanchez of **Thames Valley Air Ambulance Service** enlightened us. Her visit tied in perfectly with the WI's most recent campaign, 'Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers'. Laura began by clarifying the difference



between a heart attack and cardiac arrest with a memorable comparison: the first is like a plumbing problem, a blockage that leaves a person conscious but in intense pain; the latter is like an electrical problem, where the power suddenly goes out - the person suddenly loses consciousness, is gasping for breath or is not breathing normally as their heart stops working. The latter requires an immediate response, beginning with a 999 call. We were reassured that the call handler would talk the bystander through every stage, including releasing the code to access the defibrillator. In fact, administering CPR while waiting for an ambulance to arrive **doubles** a person's chances of survival!

So why are we so reluctant to step in when needed? Common fears and misconceptions about undertaking CPR are that we won't be able to do compressions properly, or that we will do more harm than good if we get it wrong. However, it also appears that cardiac arrest is a feminist issue. In fact, women are much less likely to be given CPR by members of the public due to a concern with having to remove clothing to do chest compressions. Thankfully, the new training includes both male and female practice dummies, and Laura clearly demonstrated the correct technique while showing us how a defibrillator works. After reinforcing this with a short video clip of the compression technique - hard and fast to the beat of 'Staying Alive' - and informing us that CPR no longer requires us to give 'the kiss of life' (now known as rescue breathing), we all left feeling more confident that we would follow the 3 key messages:

1. **Do something, not nothing**
2. **The priority is to ring 999**
3. **You can make a difference!**

On a cheerier note, on a gloriously sunny day in March, the gardening lovers among us visited **Hartwell Nurseries in Stone**, coming away with a large selection of beautiful plants. We could not miss the opportunity of having lunch outdoors while comparing our

purchases and sharing our gardening tips. Another enjoyable social event in May was a group visit to the **Wycombe Swan** to watch an uplifting performance of **'Allegra'**, an emotional, funny and tender play that encourages us to appreciate people's differences.

May's speaker brought the **Galapagos Islands** to Speen for an evening. Richard Stevenson gave a fascinating talk about the unique animals, birds and geology of this area. Charles Darwin's observations of unique localised species revealed how animals adapted to their specific environments. However, the islands are today threatened by the results of global warming and the huge colonies of rats introduced in the past by various ancient trading ships.

Closer to home, the world of journalism was the subject of our June speaker, Bill Hamilton, **'Our Man on the Spot'**. Bill's brilliantly illustrated, animated and humorous account of his 60-year career, starting as a junior on a regional newspaper and ending as a familiar face on BBC News, gave us an insight into the developments in media as well as the topics he covered, including some of the worst trouble spots at home and abroad: the inner city riots in Toxteth and Brixton, the IRA bombings in Brighton and London, the wars in Lebanon and Sudan, and the plight of neglected children in post-communist Albania. We were left in awe of his energy and commitment.

July was a busy month with our **Summer Social Strawberry Tea** in the Village Hall with cakes, strawberries, meringues, scones, homemade jam and cream provided by the committee as members and visitors, including our WI advisor Judith Forster, listened to longstanding WI member **Catherine Butler** describe her memories of growing up in

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the village when it had 3 pubs, a butcher, bakers, a doctor and an hourly bus service! Halcyon days.



We also held our usual tea and cake stall in the marquee at **Speen Fete**, raising money for the Village Hall amongst other charities.

As well as the social benefit, don't forget that the very modest annual WI membership fee also includes use of the **online learning platform called VIA**, which gives access to many free online courses such as arts and crafts, learning languages, lectures on history, literature and the arts, and practical help, for example, with technology, finance and wellbeing.

So, if you'd like to make new friends, hear interesting talks, learn new skills through the WI online learning platform and help campaign on a wide range of issues, you're very welcome to give us a try! We meet at **Speen Village Hall at 7.30 pm on the first Thursday of each month**. Have a glass of wine before listening to a stimulating talk, followed by tea and cake. You can be assured of a warm welcome, and there's no obligation to join until you have seen what's on offer. For further info, contact Jenny at spewnwi@gmail.com

Future Meetings

August 6th 2026

Plague Villages

September 3rd 2026

Working For Auntie

October 1st 2026

Film Night

PIGOTTSUPDATE

From Celia James, Pigots, Piggotts Hill, North Dean

“Is it Piggotts with one g or two?”

To clear up one head scratcher, is it Piggotts with one “g” or two? Historically it was always two. When Eric Gill lived at Pigotts between 1928 and his death in 1940, quite possibly for sound type-face-related artistic reasons, he decided Pigotts looked better with one “g” and dropped the “farm” from the name of the place. The Wheeler Robinson family, who owned Pigotts between 1963 and 2025 kept that convention which continues. On maps, however, you will find Piggotts Wood with two “g”s.

The decision to call the house Pigotts in 1928, rather than Piggotts Farm was not anything to do with typesetting, as suggested in the last SNDN issue by my esteemed (and seldom mistaken) colleague Jeremy Hamilton.

If I may be bold enough to enlighten him: perhaps it was slightly easier to write Pigotts (in handwriting) with one g, but the main reason (as Gill's biographers explain) was to bring it in line with the name as pronounced locally - and on ancient maps - “Pycotts”.

North Dean Remembers Peter Keen

Readers of the Speen and North Dean News will remember with fondness Peter Keen who played an active part in our community for many years. Many tributes have been published to him detailing his contribution not only to multiple charitable organisations but also in his role leading the successful family firm, Hypnos, based in Princes Risborough. After his death last year, we wanted to recognise his contribution to our village and the wider community and after consultation it was decided that a tree be planted in his memory in the field behind the North Dean Memorial Hall.

As Peter was Chairman of the Trustees of the North Dean Memorial Hall, the current Trustees and members of the Village Hall Committee came together with Peter's family in April this year to plant a tree in his memory in the field behind the Memorial Hall in North Dean. Judy chose a beautiful flowering cherry tree which will provide a lovely display of blossom every spring going forward.

Thank you to Peter and to Judy for all they have done for our community, and we feel that the tree provides a fitting tribute in Peter's memory.



North Dean Village Hall Quiz Night

by Christine Ryman

On the last Friday of March this year, the North Dean Village Hall Committee organized a quiz night for the locals, which turned out to be such a fun, lively and at times tense event! We take this competition rather seriously!!

All 60 contestants across 10 teams came armed with eager minds and packed the hall, ready for the onslaught of many challenging questions.



Quizmaster, Nick Howard, yet again hosted this annual event, and kept the momentum going with his usual wit and humour during every round. We were entertained with, amongst others, a mix of general knowledge, sport, local trivia and a

rather difficult picture round of various artists past & present, some too tricky to identify!! The majority of the questions were super difficult to say the least and I have to admit I knew few of the answers! But

as per usual, the North Deane's did not disappoint with their extensive knowledge relating to many of these various topics. Huge congratulations to the young winning team – The Rock Paper Quizzers – from Beechdean, including Tom & Chris Kent. Well done guys!

All the while, drinks of wine (supplied by Lloyds Wines) and beer were served by barmen Steve Rogers and Rob Howard and we owe a huge thanks to our newby Bob Morrison for very generously donating a keg of beer. The delicious burgers & chips from "Streetfood Burgers" filled us up extensively and of course, as ever, Beechdean yet again kindly donated their flavoursome ice-cream which went down very well indeed. **MANY THANKS TO YOU ALL.**

The 50/50 raffle draw raised a staggering £1600 for the village hall with the lucky (nameless) winner very generously donating his winnings to the village hall. To you know who you are, we are most thankful and appreciate your generosity immensely.

Overall, a most joyous and atmospheric evening was met by all and we left in good spirits, being all the wiser now! A great way to round off a happy community get-together. Thankyou so much to the organizers and donators.

See you all next year folks!

SPEEN & NORTH DEAN GOLF DAY

by Dick Pooley



The heavens had opened, both the day before and on the morning of this prestigious bi-annual event at the Club at Mapledurham GC. With the forecast for still more rain, it meant that three players from Speen withdrew at the last moment, prompting some rearrangement of tee times and groups.

However, by first tee, the rain stopped and in fact we had perfect conditions for playing golf.

In the usual very competitive way of all these competitions, the final result was extremely close.

In **first place** with 40 points Duncan Wilson (Speen)

Second with 39 points Pete McKenna (Sp)

Third with 37 points Pete Taylor (ND) on count back

Fourth with 37 points John Forrest (ND) on count back

Fifth with 37 points Tim Crossley (Sp) on count back

Sixth with 37 points Bob Morrison (ND) on count back



Mike Winson (Sp) won **Longest Drive**

Nearest the Pin was won by Bob Morrison (ND)

Thus, the overall result with all 36 players scores entered into Jo Allan's laptop, North Dean 31.4 average Stableford points and Speen 30.5 average Stableford points. A winning margin of just 0.9

Thus, North Dean regained the Keen Cup! The cup was presented to the North Dean Captain by Mrs Judy Keen (*photo*).

My thanks to all those who turned out to play and support the Villages. Also, to Mapledurham GC who had had their electricity turned off for important repair work but still managed to produce a most wonderful BBQ and some tasty desserts.

We all look forward to contesting the Beek Trophy in the Autumn.

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RECIPE

by Mandy How

Kale and Almond Pesto



Ingredients

65g kale, stalks removed, roughly chopped

120ml olive oil

¼ clove garlic

Juice of 1 lemon

50g whole almonds, toasted in a dry pan

(Makes approx. 4 portions)

Method

To make the pesto, pulse the kale, olive oil, garlic and lemon juice in a food processor until smooth.

Add the almonds and pulse again until smooth.

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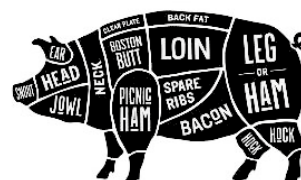
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SPEEN MEMORIES

by Catherine Butler

Speen as I knew it when I was a child ...

(Catherine Butler, who lives (and was born) in Rose Cottage on Hampden Road is a long-standing member of Speen W.I. and came along to our Summer Social to talk about growing up in and returning to live in the village).

I was born in September 1936 in Rose Cottage. My claim to fame has always been that I slept in the bedroom I was born in, or rather it was until four years ago when I slipped on the stairs and broke my femur, now I am not supposed to go upstairs!!



We used to spend a lot of our time in Hampden Woods, we would chat and watch the two Mr Dean's, local bodgers, while they worked making chair legs for the factories in High Wycombe.

I went to the old Speen School which consisted of two cloakrooms

Rose Cottage was just a two-up two-down with a tiny kitchen and the toilet up the back in a shed. Also, a small room on the side which was originally a bike shed and this became my grandmother's bed sitting-room. After the war we had an addition of a bathroom but I was told the bricks were rationed so it was very small with the toilet attached at the back.

Looking back, I had a wonderful childhood with so much freedom. Along the road at Hillbrow my Aunt Lucy Turner had a long garden which ran right down to the grounds of Abbotswood. Here we played and also scrumped her apples and cherries. Next door lived Jim and Jennie Lawrence who were my childhood friends and still are. They both still live locally and they take me out and about now I can no longer drive. We spent our teens riding our bikes all over the area, often taking sandwiches and staying out for the day.

We all attended the Baptist Chapel where we had the YPF (Young People's Fellowship) which was like our Youth Club. We used to go around in a little gang after the Sunday Evening Service, wandering around the village in the dark singing hymns and songs, all very innocent.

and two rooms, the big room and the little room. The little room was for the infants and presided over by Miss Smith who rode her bike from Downley each day. She was known to us all as "Boiler Smith" although I don't know why. Miss Hopton was Head Mistress and lived at the end of Hampden Road, she was in charge of "The Big Room". During the war when we had evacuees and more children, we had a curtain across the room and an extra teacher Mrs Ashby came from Hughenden to help. There was a big air-raid shelter in the playground which I don't remember ever being used although there were lots of secret meetings arranged round the back by the older ones. Until they started transferring to a secondary school you spent all your schooldays there. I was told my parents took my brother out and sent him to a private school in High Wycombe, he evidently refused to do knitting!!! He was 15 or 16 years old.

I remember very little about the war days. My brother came home once with some shrapnel after an enemy plane had come down in the plantation. We had troops on manoeuvres camping at the bottom of the playing fields and they came over to us for hot water in the mornings. We also had

evacuees sent to us, a mother and baby who had the little room on the end of the house.

Cricket was a big thing in those days with a lot of rivalry between the local villages. Several men from Bomber Command used to come and play if Speen was short of numbers. My friend dated one of these who in turn brought his mate to make a foursome, and that was how I met George, my future husband, on a blind date. He left the RAF at the end

of his National Service returning to his home in Staines. We were eventually married in Speen Baptist Chapel in 1957 with our reception in Speen Village Hall.

Our lives then over the years went a full circle bringing us back to Rose Cottage in 1987 shortly before my Mother died, just as we had always planned.

When I was young the village looked very different – so many houses have been added over the years.

We had a Butchers shop run by Mr Priest, a Bakers by Mr Martin, a Post Office with a small haberdashery corner run by the Ridgley's; three Public Houses, the King William run by Mr Lovett and the Hatt family, The George run by the Ellis family and The Plough by Ishbel McDonald, daughter of Prime Minister Ramsey McDonald. Miss Coleman had The Spinners and Weavers and Harry Ward the Builders yard at the back of Rosebank Cottage on Chapel Hill.

We also had a Doctor's Surgery every Thursday: Mrs Ramsden who lived next door to us in Kingsley would put lots of chairs down her hall and Dr. Edwards would come from the Cross Keys in Princes Risborough to hold the surgery.

The Village Shop was run by Miss Emily Saunders



and after her came Mr Garrod who gave us Club Swinging lessons in the Village Hall. Next came the Jones family and by this time we had petrol pumps. A new shop was built which opened in May 1998 with several houses built behind by The Bucks Housing Association.

The old Post Office opposite was famous for having the oldest "Telegram Boy" – old Mr George

Ridgley; when he was almost 100 he would take a telegram along the road and I still have one he delivered to me on my Wedding Day from our family in Australia.

Next to this and previously known as St Peter's Hill, now The Old House, had a famous British author Rumer Godden living there for some time. She wrote around 70 fiction and non-fiction book including The Black Narcissus which was made into a film.

Next door was our village Baker: Mr Martin. At Christmas everyone took their turkeys to cook in his bread oven. When we wanted a loaf of bread we would go in and help ourselves off the rack and leave the money in a pot. Mrs Martin also made delicious Lardy Cakes.

Next to the Bakers was our main shop run by my uncle Arch Janes who was married to Elsie Plumridge (my Aunt Elsie Cello I called her as she played the cello at the Chapel). Arch was also the village taxi owner. Mr Keen then took the shop over and renamed it Quality House – the shop was eventually turned into two houses where Martin Hart and John Oliver now live.

Along Hampden Road, beyond Rose Cottage, was an old house called Hillbrow where I spent a lot of my childhood with my Aunt Lucy (Turner). This house eventually went and two new houses

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replaced it, one of them still called Hillbrow.

After Monkton Way a small lane led up to the old cricket pavilion which was built by some of my ancestors and for some time this was home to Margaret Jones. This was later demolished and a house called "The Wickets" was built by Bob and Ann Stupples, the current occupants.

Next to this I remember a large chalet bungalow called Cornerways, this was built by my ancestors

Ward and Turner. Seven houses replaced it, becoming the road Cornerways. Opposite this was The Chalet which looked just like a Swiss Chalet with a balcony all round. This has gone and there are now four houses "Hampden Gate" in its place. Next to this was the Chalet Nursery with lots of greenhouses where we went for our tomatoes and cucumbers. This is Woodview Drive with six more houses.



Speen Village Hall Hosts National Emergency Briefing Screening

On Thursday 11th June, Speen Village Hall was the setting for a special community screening of the National Emergency Briefing film — a gathering that drew 47 residents from across the local area, including Speen, High Wycombe, Princes Risborough, North Dean, Great Hampden, Prestwood and Hughenden.

The National Emergency Briefing began life as an invitation-only event in Westminster, where leading UK experts briefed politicians and public figures on the mounting risks posed by climate and nature breakdown. The film brings that same evidence to local communities, allowing residents to see, on the record, the same briefing given to decision-makers in Parliament.

The Speen screening covered a wide sweep of ground, with contributions from experts addressing:

- **Climate and weather extremes** and their accelerating impact on the UK
- **Nature and biodiversity** loss and its knock-on effects
- **Health impacts** of a changing climate

- **Food security** and the resilience of our supply chains
- **National security and economics**
- **The energy transition** and what it means for households and industry

Attendees were engaged throughout, and the screening was followed by a lively discussion session, giving local people the chance to react to what they'd heard, ask questions, and share their own views. Organisers also captured audience sentiment as part of the session, feeding local reactions back into the wider national conversation the Briefing is trying to spark.

Feedback from the evening was positive, with many attendees remarking that although the evidence presented was sobering, the discussion left them feeling more informed — and more motivated to see meaningful action taken.

Find out more about these screenings, see the map which shows where other screenings are taking place and when. <https://www.nebriefing.org>

Nature and Our Neighbourhood



In May, Speen Environmental Action Group (SEAG) organised an afternoon of talks and practical advice about supporting local wildlife and living more sustainably in a time of climate crisis. The event attracted about sixty people to the Village Hall, where they heard three contrasting talks. The topics ranged from improving our gardens to running a sustainable smallholding, and from national policy to the survival of a single rare species of beetle.

SEAG is grateful to Village Environmental Services for their financial support of the event.

Wildlife Gardening and the Loss of Bio-Abundance

Jon Mason is a local wildlife photographer and Instagram naturalist. He tolled the bell for the huge loss of bio-abundance through which we are living: flying insects are down 60%, hedgehogs down 80% and turtle doves down 98% in twenty years: "that lovely purring sound, that sound of summer" is heard no more. He had found an old bottle of insect remover for car windscreens in his garage, a product nobody needs now.

Jon then listed things we can all do to reverse these threats: use natural fertilisers, don't use pesticides, weedkillers and peat, plan for sustainability and water resilience with, for example, drought-tolerant planting, and, of course, reduce, reuse and recycle.

To prevent trichomoniasis, a fatal avian infection,

advice on bird-feeders has changed recently; the RSPB recommends only offering seeds and nuts from November to April inclusive. Jon concurred, adding these ideas:

- Put out less food, so that it does not sit long enough to go damp
- Move feeders around regularly and wash them frequently
- Grow teasels — goldfinches will feed directly from the seed heads
- Put out apples, an excellent, low-risk food for many garden birds
- Better still, plant an apple tree and leave its fruit on the ground for birds to eat in winter
- Focus on habitat management that increases insect abundance, since most garden birds need insects, especially during breeding season.

Some other garden tips from Jon:

- Add a small pond with pebbled edges, both for drinking and for the richer wildlife habitat it provides
- Leave dead wood and fallen leaves as habitat and mulch
- Create messy margins with native wildflowers and soft fruit.

Building a Sustainable Smallholding at Cherry Dell, Speen

A couple of years ago, Pete Blunsdon and his partner Ayesha moved to Cherry Dell in Speen, committed to establishing a sustainable smallholding. Their talk covered ethical principles and practical action. Pete and Ayesha practice permaculture, an alternative to industrial farming that draws on traditional farming practices. It involves a deliberately diverse assembly of plants grown around a central tree, each playing a specific role in the system. They also breed chickens which provide eggs and meat, clear scraps, contribute manure as fertiliser and scratch

ground in ways that benefit soil health. The couple move their mobile chicken coop every few days to a fresh patch of pasture: the chickens are always on fresh ground and their manure falls through mesh and fertilises the earth below. Pete and Ayesha also keep sheep and bees; bees particularly benefit from gardens which flower from early spring to autumn, so that nectar is available throughout.

More recently, Pete and Ayesha have planted an orchard of apple, pear, cherry and plum trees using volunteer tree-planting parties, and a new hedge, a wildlife corridor containing more than a thousand trees. They have installed two owl boxes, both of which are now occupied. As part of their commitment to connecting children with the natural world, they run beekeeping experience sessions for young people. Other courses on archery, terrariums and venison preparation are available via the couple's website, www.naturalprog.com

Pete and Ayesha believe in community sufficiency. This is not the same as self-sufficiency, because they could not do what they are doing alone. They depend on neighbours, friends and volunteers. This reciprocal, community-centred model is as important as any individual technique or project if they are to connect their community to the sources of food, to help people understand what ethical husbandry is, and to pass practical skills on to the next generation.

Pete and Ayesha came with their charming lamb Forrest, which, like Mary's, followed them everywhere until it wandered off and tried to eat an electric cable. Pete saved the day and the lamb.

The Buckinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Noble Chafer Beetle

Julia Carey is a senior environmental records officer with Buckinghamshire Council. She described the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (www.bucksmknep.co.uk/nature-strategy) which focuses understanding and resources on local biodiversity — mapping what is known, identifying where action could have the greatest impact and then setting priorities.

The Strategy includes a list of species prioritised for conservation action within Buckinghamshire, habitat niches, target areas where effort might have the greatest impact and an interactive online map.

The area around Speen is of high biodiversity value which could be enhanced by converting plantation conifers back to native broadleaf. Speen is a target area because of the orchards that were here in the

past. If someone wishes to protect an orchard or argue that development should not destroy one, this designation provides a means. Julia described the measures associated with the Speen Target Area: restoring local orchard chains, planting new orchards and creating wildlife habitat.

Julia then turned from local environmental policy to another of her interests: the noble chafer, a large, iridescent green beetle which lives in traditional orchards. The larvae live in the decaying heartwood at the centre of an ageing fruit tree, what Julia described as "the red squishy bit". This decay is a normal part of the tree's lifecycle. Julia spends much time sifting frass, the mulch produced by wood-boring insects, in search of noble chafer larvae and other indicators of the species' presence. Despite decades dedicated to the beetle, she has never seen one in the wild.

Unsurprisingly, there were audience questions about glis glis. Not only a pest to Speen householders, this invasive, non-native species also eats birds' eggs and causes other environmental damage. Unhelpfully, the law protects glis glis, forbidding their trapping, killing or release without a license, so if you do find one in your house, arrange for its destruction. Glis glis are said to be delicious, like those other invasive and harmful animals, muntjac deer and American signal crayfish. If only we could eat ourselves out of this problem.

Julia ended by asking us to

- Explore the local recovery maps <https://bucksmknep.co.uk/nature-strategy/local-nature-recovery-strategy-for-buckinghamshire-and-milton-keynes/>
- Help map and record local orchards
- Tell Julia if you have old fruit trees in your garden. Even a single tree is ecologically valuable for foraging insects, and she would like to know where old trees are.
- Report tree cavities containing frass. You can collect a sample and post it to Julia or she will come and collect it herself. There could be evidence of noble chafer or other important species.
- Share knowledge about who owns local land.
- Contact Julia if you want to survey orchards but cannot do the printing. She will post recording sheets to you.

Julia's email - Julia.carey@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Tom Dent

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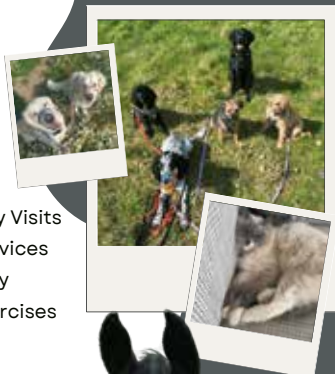
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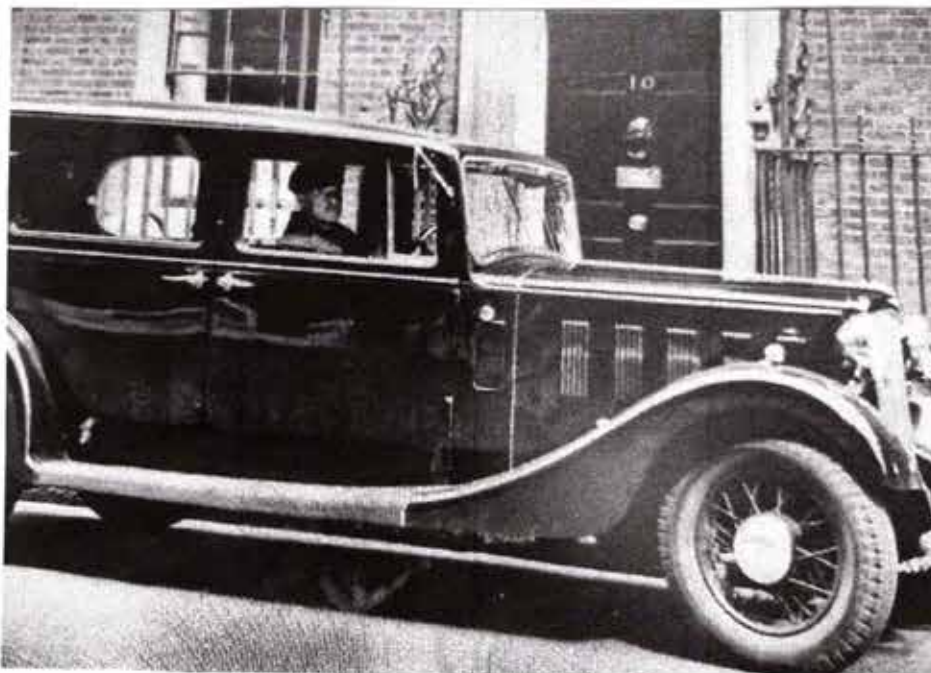
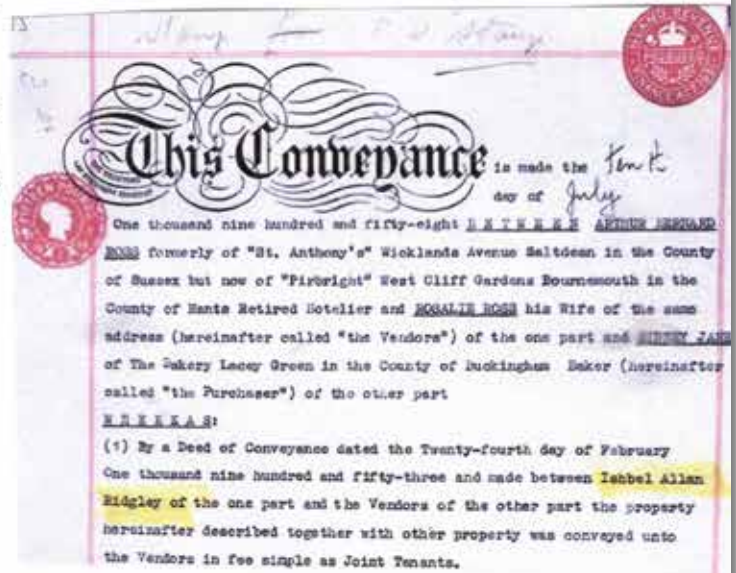
Reginald Parker- Chauffeur to Five Prime Ministers - by Peter Symonds

In recent editions I have provided historical records for Flowers Bottom and other locations. At the time I was not aware of interesting information about one of the properties in Flowers Bottom. Jess, who lives at Ploughshare, formerly the home of the Cleaver family, has been able to provide interesting records related to the property and one of its former occupants, Reginald Parker.

My previous belief was that the property was probably built in the 1960's with an unusual "upside down" layout to benefit from the views down Flowers Bottom valley. However, the property is evidently significantly older and the layout is merely a consequence of its former use. It would seem that the property was actually built in the mid-1930's as a ministerial garage with the living accommodation above being the chauffeurs flat. Some internal structures of the building are apparently very substantial. This timing follows the appointment of Ramsey MacDonald as Prime Minister (1924 and 1929-1935). The Ramsey family, who were from Chesham Bois, would have become regular visitors to Chequers, the country home of British prime ministers. His daughter Ishbel MacDonald acted as the political hostess at Chequers. Soon after her father resigned in 1935 Ishbel purchased The Old Plow in Speen. She must have then bought the site on the opposite side of the road for the ministerial garage.

Her married name, Ishbel Ridgley appears in a conveyance that refers to her selling the property in 1953. Planning records confirm that an application was made in 1955 for "conversion of garages into a dwelling house".

Reginald Parker, who was born in 1885, served as chauffeur to five different Prime Ministers, Ramsey MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain, Clement Attlee, and last but not least, Sir Winston Churchill, during the second World War. Reports in The Recorder dated 26th November 1949 sharing the chauffeurs fascinating story indicate that his most exciting drives were with Mr Churchill.



Archive records which had belonged to Reginald Parker were found in Derby and were auctioned in July 2020. Jess, and her husband were successful in bidding for the boxes of telegraphs, photographs and other memorabilia. These include a signed photograph of Churchill and numerous Post Office telegraphs and instructions from Downing Street and the Metropolitan Police as to where the Prime Minister should be picked up from and taken to.

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WILDLIFEWATCH

Peter Symonds

The past few months have seen some exciting wildlife records for the two villages. Hedgehogs are not common anywhere these days and they are very rare in areas with high concentrations of badgers, since badgers are capable of uncurling a hedgehog that has adopted its protective curled position. However, one was reported from North Dean in March and then on 24th June Ben and Sarah Wilde managed to capture footage of a hedgehog in their back garden in Speen. It sounds as if, despite providing food and water the hedgehog may have moved on but an exciting record, nonetheless. (Sadly, a hedgehog died on the road at Great Hampden in July.)

Tawny owls are regularly seen or heard in our local woods but this year a pair nested close to the heart of Speen raising at least two fluffy young. Like many young birds they emerge from the nest before they can fly properly. However, after spending a couple of days in a large garden, they disappeared presumably to the local woods.

SEAG organised an interesting talk on aspects of wildlife which revealed some interesting records. It would seem that Barn Owls have bred on the southern side of the village. Sustainable farming practices in the vicinity are also seeking to support a reintroduction of Duke of Burgandy butterflies into the area. Another speaker focussed on local rarities including the Noble Chafer, a bright metallic green beetle associated with old orchards, of which Speen has a few. It would be very interesting to hear if anyone sees these attractive beetles.

One rare butterfly that I recorded for the first time in some 25 years was a Purple Emperor butterfly. This high-flying butterfly is normally hard to see but when it landed on our bathroom windowsill I had excellent close-up views.



Ami Brownridge reported regular visits to their garden by a number of Rose ringed Parakeets which were particularly attracted to a Walnut tree apparently. A juvenile Grey Wagtail in my woodland was a new record inside the wood.

One noticeable change in wildlife behaviour has been noted in our local Roe deer. Bucks have been seen and photographed in gardens in both North Dean and Speen. Whilst gardens on the



periphery of the village have had occasional visits in the past, we now have these deer roaming more casually in Cul de sacs in the middle of the village like Abbotswood and Archway. I am not sure whether this change is due to the absence of water in most of the countryside or the presence of tasty garden plants.

Please let me know of any interesting records - Peter Symonds
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A photograph of an elderly woman with white hair and a young woman with dark hair, both smiling and standing outdoors in a garden. The elderly woman is wearing a blue and white patterned cardigan over a white top. The young woman is wearing a white t-shirt. They are standing in front of a wooden fence and some greenery.

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DARVILLS HILL FARM

Charlotte Downing

All aboard the 'SkylArk', Linnets and other farmland birds @ Darvills Hill Farm

I have recently been reminded of my childhood fascination with skylarks, as the air above the meadows of our farm, has been unexpectedly filled with their song this summer. I'm a child of the 1970s, a simpler time when UK farmland birds like skylarks



flourished, spaghetti bolognese was considered exotic and children watched TV greats like the Wombles, Bagpuss and a surreal cartoon called 'Noah and Nelly'. This husband-and-wife duo went on epic adventures in their flying longboat called the 'SkylArk' along with their crew of double headed creatures (one head happy and one head sad). Nelly was the brains of the operation, saving the day by knitting her way out of trouble. Noah's 'All aboard the SkylArk' refrain lodged in my young brain, and it surfaces whenever I hear a skylark singing, their volume far outweighing the size of these tiny creatures.

The skylarks that have appeared this year are unexpected as I have spent the last five summers, since we took on the stewardship of the farm, wandering the hedgerows and fields, Merlin Bird App in hand willing it to tell me that our endeavours in restoring biodiversity in the soil, meadows and hedges is making a difference to the declining numbers of UK farmland birds, only to be met by silence. I felt a bit like one of Noah and Nelly's double headed creatures, on the one hand concerned at the absence of birds and at the same time optimistic that change could be on its way.

Many UK bird species rely on the farmed environment, however there are 12 specialist species that are totally dependent on specific farmland habitats for nesting sites and food. These habitats include, hedgerows and trees, field

edges, species rich meadows, traditional orchards and wood pasture. In the past on our farm there would have been an abundance of these specialists including skylarks, linnet, yellowhammers, corn bunting, turtle doves and

grey partridge. However, in the decades after the Second World War, our farm like so many in the UK underwent well-intentioned changes to farming practice to boost food production. These included hedgerow and orchard removal and neglect, intensification of grass production and chemical inputs. This countrywide loss of habitat diversity and decrease in insect and seed resources directly contributed to a dramatic decline in nine of the 12 specialist farmland bird species since the 1970s, and so skylarks are now on the British Trust for Ornithology's red list of birds of conservation concern.

When I first heard skylarks this summer, I thought they might just be using us as a transit lounge, but they stayed and were swiftly followed by pairs of Linnet and Yellowhammer, who have been foraging in the farm's restored hedges that are thickening and filling out. I have now started to consider the possibility that the farm is once again providing the resources these declining farmland birds need. This ornithological assembly could be a one-off event, but I'm putting my optimistic head on 'SkylArk' style; we may not possess Nelly's knitting superpower to mend the human-made biodiversity crisis, but we do have Nature. Maybe allowing wilder meadows and scruffier hedgerows could be a way of helping our avian cousins out of trouble, while still being able to grow food and fibre for ourselves.

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SPEENPLAYING FIELDS

by Matthew Davies (Still Acting, Interim, Temporary Chair of SPFA)

Summary

A typically active period since the prior message, with a number of events and ad-hoc activities keeping the playing fields in active use and in good order. We saw Funday, Fete, Birthdays, Golf, Football screening all made possible through the usual jobs to cover its ongoing maintenance.

FunDay

This year's Funday once again was considered a roaring success, with the fiercely competitive Yellow emerging victorious after a very closely fought set of contests. Game innovation was taken up to a level never thought possible until, up-steps a pair of Studridge Lane boffins who got their heads together and contrived to make the magic happen - enormous thanks to Jonathan Allan and Duncan Wilson, without whom this year's event would not have happened at all. Thankfully, the Kiddie Kurling mat has survived another pasting and will now hibernate quietly for another year.

Toby Cook took the Kiddie Kurling Kup honours, with a stunning performance and an almost perfect blend of distance, poise, and core stability. Andy Thompson dug out an old whistle and kindly agreed to slip into the role of revered referee. He rightly stood for no nonsense nor had any truck with gripes nor bleating. Andy ensured the typical test destruction of the rulebook and inadvertent dilution of the spirit of fair play were not allowed to interfere with a healthy and robust set of contests.

Our competitors were ably served with refreshments and delicious food, thanks to the unflappable set of volunteers on the bar and barbeque.

Fete

Our playing fields were once again transformed for the Fete. Flags and bunting festooned the various gazebos and provided a colourful addition to the much-needed shady areas. SPFA volunteers staffed a couple of the stalls and made a (perhaps telling) contribution to the raffle. Any suggestion that the barrow full of booze is merely recycled old prizes or leftover holiday plonk that seemed a good idea at the time to buy are entirely without foundation. It's great to see the fields in such use and in great shape as we support this traditional fixture.

Maintenance & Bike Park

As is often celebrated in these pages, the condition of the main field, the under 5s play area, the bike park and meadow at Ridgley's Field is all and only achieved by volunteer work or through judicious use of the modest funds the activities and, more materially, the regular draw generate.

We are lucky to have some very capable people on the committee and between us we generally aim to tackle such work as bike ramp repairs, gate replacement, strimming, mowing, pavilion refits which are undertaken

alongside the regular and even more glamorous jobs, such as fortnightly safety inspections and bin emptying.

While we do so willingly and while some of my fellow trustees are very capable, we do need to rely on village support - both financially and physically - your continued support through support of events, participating in the draw or by volunteering your labour for events or work parties is very much needed and very much appreciated. Finally on this topic, if you happen to spot anything in need of attention, please do let us know, if you are able to take your rubbish home please do, if you do need to dispose of items obviously please do, but also please remember that when you next meet, greet, hug or handshake a committee member that what you've left or binned at SPF will likely have been picked up or out by one of our fine hands.

The Draw

I mentioned the draw above but do so again more specifically to advertise its existence. SPFA does run a regular draw, community members can pay in, buying tickets against which a random draw is done periodically and modest cash prizes available. It's a simple but very effective way of supporting the fields, is one of our main sources of essential funds and can even pay out a few quid now and again which you can put to good use at places such as Speen Stores (or even re-donated to SPFA!)

Golf

Around the same time as the men's world cup football was in flight (and some technically gifted souls managed to make use of the fields and the marquee being in situ to show some of the games) the Open Golf was also occurring. In celebration of The Open, areas of the fields were transformed into a 6-hole championship course. The Royal King William was a temporary, links emulating course, well-suited to the modest-driving, precision golfer. It was a great innovation and well-used, and thanks are due to our resident countryman of the eventual actual Open winner (Ryan Fox - NZ) for the ideation and creation. Rest assured the divots are to be repaired, bunkers filled and holes reinstated to smooth turf and the successful undertaking recorded for posterity in the annals of the R&A.

Upcoming

Things quieten down for a while on SPF in this fallow year for festivals and balls, but we are always open to such events as pop-up pubs or general socials - watch this space. We do have a more headline event brewing, involving a performance by the local band; "The Barnstormers" - we have secured the gig, but the scheduling is yet to be firmed up while their lead singer and creative maestro is out of the country. More to come, but possibly an event in September or perhaps as a launchpad for Spring 2027!

Thanks again for all the support!

WHO'S WHO

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Speen & North Dean Golf Day	Dick Pooley	07785 996 511
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/Monica Dent	07511 733 199
Speen & North Dean Toddlers	Sandy Mitcheson	07747 635 974
Speen Baptist Church - Administrator	Sandy Mitcheson	01494 488 875
Speen Environmental Action Group (SEAG)	Jane Farley	07889 433 630
Speen Festival	Liz Patroe	07976 329 953
Speen Fete	Lucy Johnston	07770 868 029
SHH (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 Chair	Dishan Popat	07870 552 549
Speen Stores and Post Office	Ranjan	07581 347 681
Speen Tennis Court - Secretary	Philippa Lane	01494 488 453
Speen Village Hall - Bookings	Sue Taylor	01494 488 500
Speen Village Hall - Chairman	Cat Cook	07917 775 115
Speen WI - Secretary	Jenny Pearce	07305 188 093
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