

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

SPOONNEWS

LOVE STORY

Red Rose boss
Eddie Jones on
dream endings

PAST PRESENTS

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the last decade will
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The children's charity of rugby

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FUTUREPROOFING IN AN UNFAMILIAR PRESENT

WITH much of daily life now effectively “on pause” as the world grapples to understand and contain the coronavirus crisis, the concept of time has somewhat shifted.

The past certainly seems to currently make more sense than the present and in this issue we unashamedly reflect back on some of Wooden Spoon’s not-so-distant successes (pages 8-21). Those involved with fundraising and implementing these projects at the time should be rightly proud, but even more so knowing that the actions of yesteryear are continuing to impact on the lives of thousands today and tomorrow.

Chronicling what has gone before is important, but just as England boss and autobiographer Eddie Jones reflects in this issue (page 6-7), it is the next chapter that will define us.

And despite the uncertainty surrounding the short-term, all involved with the children’s charity of rugby are working tirelessly – albeit following government guidance and working from home wherever possible – to ensure Wooden Spoon’s future is befitting its past.

We will do so with the wellbeing of our family – our amazing members, volunteers, regional committees, fundraisers and corporate partners – at the forefront of our minds but with a determination to make a difference to those lives who need it most.

The year so far has been testament to this pledge; we have already committed to spending a record £1.3 million on projects to help positively transform the lives of children with a disability or facing disadvantage in the UK and Ireland.

Unfortunately, time does not stand still for those Wooden Spoon strives to support.

Social distancing and self-isolation do not cease statistics relating to child poverty or the increasing number of young people grappling with life-limiting illnesses.

I recognise these are unprecedented circumstances and that you will be rightly concerned about those close to your own home or be suffering from your own physical or financial toil, but please don’t forget about Wooden Spoon. With fundraising events falling foul of the coronavirus, we need you now more than ever before.

Until we next meet, I hope this edition of Spoonnews provides some respite from whatever the realities of lockdown mean for you. Enjoy the issue.

Sarah Webb
Chief Executive Officer



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A full-page photograph of a middle-aged man with a receding hairline, smiling and standing on a green golf course. He is wearing a dark navy blue V-neck sweater over a light-colored collared shirt, dark navy trousers, and dark leather shoes. His hands are in his pockets. The background shows a blurred view of a golf course with green grass and a blue fence. In the top left corner, there is a quote in white text. In the bottom right corner, there is another quote in white text.

"I'd like to be known as a coach that has helped improve the game and helped improve players. If some people say that at the end of my career then I'll be pretty happy."

"Coaching at international level is a great honour but bringing up your daughter is something you only get one go at."

A LOVE LETTER TO RUGBY

Candid coach Eddie Jones considers the next chapter of his sporting story

ENGLAND fans may feel Eddie Jones' recently released autobiography is missing an all-important passage on leading a team to World Cup glory, but its author insists his continued commitment to the Red Rose is not motivated by creating a dream conclusion for any future memoirs.

And, despite conceding to being badly bruised by watching his charges come agonisingly close to lifting the sport's greatest prize in Yokohama last year, nor is the revered head coach interested in penning the final chapter of his rugby odyssey any time soon.

"I don't think there is a perfect ending and I don't think I'd like to have one," Eddie told *Spoonews* when quizzed on where the full stop in his sporting plot-line would come.

"I've still got plenty of energy, plenty of enthusiasm to get better and I've still got enough physical power to coach well.

"I don't really think it matters what my last coaching job is – it might be the under 15s in Camberley, Surrey or it might be the USA. The reason I coach is because I love the game and as long as that love is a central tenet to what I am doing, then it doesn't matter who I am coaching."

For the time being at least, Eddie's heart is undoubtedly England's.

The 60-year-old, who guided his current crop of players to the Triple Crown with victories over Scotland, Ireland and Wales at this year's yet unresolved Six Nations Championship, has just signed a new contract with the RFU that will keep him in charge of the Red Rose until the 2023 Rugby World Cup in France.

Having done so, the expectation now on Eddie to exorcise the pain of England's 32-12 World Cup final defeat to the Springboks is immense.

Such pressure, however, is something that the experienced coach believes he has been well conditioned for by another of his great loves – his daughter Chelsea.

"Coaching at international level is a great honour but bringing up your daughter is something you only get one go at," the Australian added. "You get a number of goes

at coaching so the pressure on being a good dad is a lot more than being a good coach."

Citing the conduct of players and fans at the World Cup as an example, Eddie believes that rugby's core values help to mitigate the stresses and strains of standing on the sidelines and make it an easy sport to be passionate about.

The England boss said: "The way people behave in rugby is universal. Look at what happened in Japan; how the Japanese embraced a great mix of nationalities and how everyone got on because everyone loves the game.

"The big difference between football and rugby is that football supporters in general love their team whereas rugby supporters generally love the game.

"Rugby fans love their team but if their team doesn't win it's not the be all and end all and I think that is a universal thing about our sport – there are some key values and once a game has finished, as hard and physical as you have played, it's then time to enjoy each other's company."

With Australia, Japan and England already on his CV, the Antipodean is better placed than most to comment on the common characteristics shared by rival nations. However, he was quick to highlight that each team boasts its own distinct DNA.

"That comes from education and the way a certain society is," he explained. "For instance, Australians are quite brash and arrogant and tend to attack more, while South Africans tend to play a very physical game where they prefer the opposition to have the ball.

"Japanese rugby at its best is fast and inventive – just as they recreated their economy following the Second World War – and the English tend to be quite conservative and that comes through in the style of rugby, particularly at set pieces and during offensive periods of the game."

As the son of a Japanese-American mum and Australian dad and someone who has consulted all around the world, Eddie has had few problems navigating such nuances and dismisses any notion that his nomadic

career and family roots have any bearing on his ability to commit wholeheartedly to his chosen cause.

"My loyalty is always to the team because I love the game," he said. "I don't look on it as being patriotic or unpatriotic.

"I love the team and players I am coaching at the time and I want to do the best thing by that group of people."

It is an approach that Eddie hopes he will be remembered for following retirement.

"I'd like to be known as a coach that has helped improve the game and helped improve players," he said. "If some people say that at the end of my career then I'll be pretty happy."

In respect of Japan, the straight-talking coach already has plenty of reason to feel content having helped to set in motion the Brave Blossoms emergence as a serious rugby force.

Eddie, who led Japan to the 2015 Rugby World Cup and masterminded their shock victory over the Springboks in Brighton five years ago, said: "I've been around to various parts of the country and in some areas the number of kids playing rugby has increased by 25 percent and I would imagine that after this World Cup there will be a similar increase.

"That means rugby becomes a more popular sport, people want to be involved in it, want to support it and if they can get the top end of the game to continue to grow it will mean Japan can continue to play tier one tests.

"You feel like you've done something positive," he concluded.

"We now have another proper rugby country in the world. They are a country all tier one countries want to play, they have shown they can compete at the highest level and have shown they can host big rugby tournaments.

"It's great to be part of creating something that has made the rugby landscape better."

Eddie may not be driven by a dream ending to his own story but – if his impact in the East is anything to go by – the editor of England's World Cup tales of triumph should not yet rule out the need for another celebratory chapter.



Wooden Spoon

The children's charity of rugby

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TODAY AND HELP US
THROUGH THESE
CHALLENGING TIMES.**

Ask your friends and family to join and help us fund more local community projects supporting vulnerable children.

Find out more woodenspoon.org.uk/become-a-member

CHEERS TO THE LAST TEN YEARS

REGARDLESS of which side of the argument you fall as to whether 1 January 2020 marked the beginning of a new decade or the final year of the last, there is no doubting that the past 10 years have been momentous for Wooden Spoon.

The highlights have, in respect of the LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge and Arctic Rugby Challenge, been exactly that – incredibly high. However, record-breaking expeditions to Earth's tallest mountain and matches played at the top of the world, have been the mere tip of the iceberg in terms of success stories.

Between 2010 and 2019, the children's charity of rugby enjoyed enduring relationships with new friends and old (page 21) and the volunteers in Wooden Spoon's regions raised more than £13 million and funded more than 652 community projects.

The legacy of these incredible endeavours will, as evidenced by many of the articles in this edition, continue to be felt well into the future and 2020 has already seen Wooden Spoon commit to spending more than £1.3 million to help positively transform the lives of children with a disability or facing disadvantage in the UK and Ireland.

And while Wooden Spoon's partners, members and volunteers should rightly feel proud of the most recent chapter in the charity's history, its life-changing work is needed more than ever. Since 2010, more than 400,000 youngsters in households with children under five are now living in poverty – an increase of more than a quarter [Save the Children, March 2019] – and in working households, the number of children growing up in poverty has increased by 800,000 in the space of 10 years [Independent, November 2019].

Poverty is especially high among families where there is an adult who is disabled, at nearly 33 percent. If there is also a disabled child, the poverty rate is 40 percent – more than twice the rate where there is no disability [Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2020].

These stark statistics serve as a reminder to the importance of your ongoing support – in whatever form – of Wooden Spoon over the next 10 years and beyond.



**£13,000,000
HAS BEEN RAISED
BY OUR REGIONS
AND SPENT ON
652 PROJECTS**

2010

2019

FUTURE FUNDING

As this edition of *Spoonews* went to press, 2020 has already seen Wooden Spoon commit to funding projects to the tune of £400,000 across the UK and Ireland. Among the children's charity of rugby regions set to benefit from this spending and see schemes built, installed or delivered in the coming months are Chilterns, Durham, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Scotland, Sussex, Wales, Warwickshire and Yorkshire.



HELPING HAND STILL FELT

THERAPY rooms funded by **Wooden Spoon Wales** almost a decade ago are continuing to help improve the lives of hundreds of young people with cerebral palsy and other allied neurological conditions each year.

The charity's £7,000 donation to Bobath Children's Therapy Centre Wales in 2011 helped to modernise the Cardiff hub's treatment suites, which are used to provide tailored care to its visitors.

Over the course of the past 12 months alone, Bobath has delivered 1,682 therapy sessions throughout Wales and treated 286 babies and children.

Arabella, this issue's cover star, is among those who have benefited.

Born ten weeks premature, Arabella endured an incredibly tough start to life; suffering with complications with her heart and bleeds on both sides of the brain.

After nine weeks in hospital, she was finally allowed home but still required oxygen to help her breathe for a further six months. Arabella's parents then noticed she was only using her right hand and, following discussions with their NHS community physiotherapist, she was referred to Bobath Wales.

"When we arrived at Bobath for our first visit, we had mixed emotions," said mum, Amanda. "We didn't want Arabella to have any physical disability but we were immediately put at ease. The two physiotherapists who assessed Arabella were incredible and meeting with Glenys, the family support officer, was also a huge support. They were able to give us emotional support, more than they probably realise, in addition to giving us an individual programme to work on at home with Arabella."

Since her first visit, Arabella has had blocks of specialist therapy, each consisting of five

sessions over two weeks, every four months. She has just turned two and is meeting all the milestones and goals set out for her by the therapy team at the centre.

"The impact that Bobath has had has been huge," continued Amanda. "With every block of therapy, Arabella's development has progressed greatly. Without Bobath we really don't think Arabella would be where she is to date."

Arabella's Bobath Wales therapist, Gosia Jon, added: "During Arabella's most recent block of therapy we set a goal for her to be able to use her hands in a more co-ordinated way, ready for her starting pre-school next year. We practised a number of tasks, such as taking her shoes and socks off, assisting with putting her clothing on, painting, gluing and carrying large items. I am delighted to see Arabella exceeding her goals at the end of her sessions."



NURTURING NEW FAMILIES

WOODEN Spoon Chilterns' historic donation to an adoption charity specialising in recruiting, training and supporting those willing to adopt "hard-to-place" children, has been instrumental in helping hundreds of young people to embrace their future with a new family.

The children's charity of rugby pledged £10,000 to fund the creation of a family therapy room for PACT [Parents and Children Together] in spring 2013 and the Reading facility has since hosted more than 1,000 sessions – often at times of crisis – to help adoptive families build attachment and trust.

Such a resource is vital given the challenging start in life experienced by many of the children who walk through its doors.

All have been at risk and removed from their birth families following neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and they are likely to have been separated from multiple short-term foster families. Consequently, it is common for them to suffer from chronic childhood trauma and attachment disorders. They can be left feeling confused, broken-

hearted, angry and depressed, which makes it hard for them to trust and bond with other adults including new parents or carers.

Their developmental trauma can also affect their ability to reach their academic potential, and to form healthy relationships with peers.

The family therapy room, which is fully

soundproofed and equipped with specialist therapeutic and sensory toys, games and books, allows many of these issues to be addressed in a calming, non-threatening environment through structured sessions, therapeutically and dyadic developmental psychotherapy.

The Wilkinsons, who adopted Sam in 2008 when he was six-years-old, are among those to have benefited from use of the facility. The family approached PACT for help when they realised their son was struggling with his history after experiencing severe neglect from his birth family.

He couldn't make sense of his past and wasn't able to talk about it. PACT's psychologist arranged for several family sessions in the therapy room, which provided Sam with a safe space and enabled a special relationship to be formed that eventually helped him to open up about his past, feelings and emotions.

It helped him to make sense of his memories and to understand what had happened was not his fault.

£10,000
1 ROOM
1,000 PLUS SESSIONS
HUNDREDS OF NEW
FAMILIES HELPED



CREATIVE STUDIO'S EXTENDED RUN

A STAR turn performed by **Wooden Spoon Scotland** eight years ago continues to provide a stage on which young people can shine and forget their troubles.

In 2012, the children's charity of rugby donated £10,000 to the Pilton Youth and Children's Project (PYCP) – a charity serving communities in Edinburgh which are among the most deprived in Scotland – to help transform an unused room into a multi-purpose creative studio.

The dramatic makeover included the installation of wooden sprung flooring for dancing, a large mirror for practising routines, ballet barres, state-of-the-art stage lighting and a sound system.

Chris Patterson, Scotland's all-time record points scorer and second most-capped player, opened the curtains on the

“It was like all the problems and challenges that they were facing on a daily basis were forgotten about for one night and they could be free from it all”

revamped venue, which quickly proved itself to be a star attraction.

A year after its opening, the studio hosted *Pilton Youth's Got Talent* – an event boasting everything from juggling to hip-hop dancing and one that united the centre's surrounding community.

Lesley Ross, PYCP's youth work, employability and volunteering project manager, said: “The amazing thing about that evening is that parents and extended family all came together and it was a chance for their kids to shine.

“They could see the amazing things that young people can do given the right nurture, time and support.

“It was like all the problems and challenges that they were facing on a daily basis were forgotten about for one night and they could be free from it all. This was really powerful

RAVE REVIEWS

"I love coming to PYCP – we get to dance and chill out in the studio. It's a great laugh." – Lisa (14)

"I practise every month for my dance competitions. PYCP let me and my mum use the space some afternoons. I haven't got much space at home in my flat, so I get to do really cool moves." – Ryan (12)

"The facilities at PYCP are brilliant. We used the studio for our nativity play – the stage was amazing and we managed to fit 60 parents and carers in." – Nursery manager

"I love running the pop-up shop from the studio – it looks so smart with the lights and the mirrors. Everyone that comes to the shop says it's stylish and they think it's cool." – Young volunteer



and in my mind showed the huge impact the funding from Wooden Spoon has had on improving the lives of local children, young people and their families."

The studio has been in near-constant use ever since, with dance sessions, fitness classes, music workshops, guest entertainers and nativity shows among the many activities featured on its busy timetable.

It has become a key resource for the team at PYCP, who help children and young people to tackle the disadvantages and hardships associated with poverty by providing opportunities for them to thrive.

"The studio is vibrant in colour and a warm inviting space," explained Lesley, highlighting that some of the families on the Project's doorstep are exposed to unemployment, poverty, addiction, poor physical and mental health and high

"The studio is vibrant in colour and a warm inviting space. For many of the young people it feels safe and secure – something that they are often longing for in their lives"

crime rates, and that the life chances of children can be compromised by caring responsibilities and the absence of stable role models.

"For many of the young people it feels safe and secure – something that they are often longing for in their lives," she concluded. "It has added to the great facilities we have within PYCP and, through our range of programmes, we reach many outcomes including reducing social isolation and developing confidence, problem solving skills and resilience.

"We help by providing a safe, supportive environment where young people can talk through worries, develop new skills and – above all – have fun.

"Helping a child or young adult to stay at school or make healthier choices offers hope of a brighter future."

RETURN VISIT

HAVING originally struck up an harmonious relationship with **Wooden Spoon Oxfordshire** nearly a decade ago, a youth group for children with additional needs in Banbury is delighted to have recently been granted an encore performance.

The Let's Play Project, which specialises in fun after-school sessions and holiday activities for young people aged five to 25, first benefited from the generosity of the children's charity of rugby in 2011 when it provided funding for a much-loved musical play area.

However, an expensive move to a new premises two years ago left the Project in need of further support to make the most of the outdoor space at its new home.

"We were previously based at a school and although we were in a rundown portacabin that wasn't fit for purpose, we had access to a playground and playing field," explained Operations Manager Tracey Owen.

"Moving meant a better building but a largely reduced outside space, so it was imperative that we made the most of the space we did have."

A Wooden Spoon donation of more than £8,000 allowed Let's Play to do precisely that – funding three interactive panels, a go-kart and playground markings that continue to enthrall the 135 families who visit.

"I can't tell you how much the children love and use the race track that was marked out using the money from Wooden Spoon," Tracey added.

"There is always someone whizzing around it on a scooter or in a go-kart and it would not be there if it hadn't been for Wooden Spoon. We were up against the wall financially when we moved and had no extra money to do anything."

Impressing the importance and value of its outside space to Let's Play's young people, Tracey concluded: "It's vital, we couldn't operate without being able to get outdoors and play, which is at the centre of everything we do."

"To be able to open the building's back doors and get the kids outside and running



"I can't tell you how much the children love and use the race track that was marked out using money from Wooden Spoon"



or driving around in the fresh air makes so much difference. All of the young people that come to us enjoy it.

"I know how important the music area was in our old premises and to be able to move and come back to Wooden Spoon and be given help again is a really special thing."

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A TOAST TO THOSE TERRIFIC TEAMS OF ONE

FROM pulling on their favourite colours for class (page 17) to running marathons (page 18) and cycling circuits of Cardiff (page 39), there are myriad ways supporters can do their bit for Wooden Spoon.

And while many choose to tackle challenges as part of a team or expansive expedition, the past decade has seen plentiful examples of individuals setting – and succeeding in smashing – their own goals.

Take Peter Cook, for example, who seeking a high after feeling low as a result of illness during 2017, raised both his spirits and funds for the children's charity of rugby by summiting Snowdon three times in the space of just 12 hours.

The **Wooden Spoon Oxfordshire** supporter completed his lofty challenge with ten minutes to spare despite a heavy fall, wet weather and a wrong turn threatening to thwart his triple assault on Wales' highest mountain. Peter, who scaled Snowdon with friends the previous year, enjoyed a relatively trouble-free start to his 23-mile hike – reaching the peak in one hour and 35 minutes – but his bid to climb more than 8,000 feet took a literal turn for the worse during the first descent.



With wet weather making the trek down more treacherous than usual, the ardent adventurer fell heavily on his hip before losing his way as a consequence of poor visibility. Although Peter's unintentional detour returned him to the base of Snowdon, it did so seven miles from his intended position.

Fearing failure at the first hurdle and in the absence of a passing bus, the rain-soaked rambler resorted to hitch-hiking and fortunately had his feat put back on track by a sympathetic driver.

Spurred on by this change in fortune, Peter

completed his second ascent in one hour and 50 minutes and – after taking a rest and refuelling at the summit – returned to the start point for his final climb with four hours and 40 minutes left on the clock.

Cheered off by his partner Emma and stepson George but slowed by a stiffening knee, the Wooden Spoon fundraiser successfully summited for a third time and – with the weather improving – completed his Snowdon hat-trick with minutes to spare.

Reflecting on his motivation for scaling a mountain three times in one day, Peter said: "For a number of reasons, it was not a good start to the year culminating in me having a chest infection and struggling to even climb my house stairs. So feeling very low I gave myself a challenge that would at the same time help some great children who face harder challenges every day."

Peter added: "After climbing Snowdon with some friends, one asked if I felt I could go immediately back up and do it again. Bravado said yes, but my legs said no.

"That thought stuck in my mind and while I thought twice may be possible, I wasn't sure three would be. So the challenge was set – it had to be three times to the summit. If I was going to ask people to part with their hard-earned cash to support my cause, I had to achieve, or at least attempt to achieve, something I didn't think I could."

DRIVING FORCE

AS THE world's largest automotive service organisation, it is perhaps little surprise that Cox Automotive has been a prominent driving force behind Wooden Spoon in recent years.

The company has completed a succession of challenges on behalf of the children's charity of rugby – including climbing Kilimanjaro and scaling Yorkshire's three highest peaks – and has raced to a £75,000 fundraising total.

Gerry Whittington, Head of Central Sales at Cox Automotive, said the handsome donation recognised a team effort across the business, which began with The Big Pass.

"We are an auction business with 15 sites and additional subsidiary businesses, so decided to ask everyone to take part," he added, explaining how an oversized rugby ball became the vehicle for the group's fundraising endeavours.

"The idea was to hold a fundraising event of their choice on behalf of Wooden Spoon, to



1 AFRICAN ASCENT + 3 PENNINE PEAKS = A MOUNTAIN OF MONEY RAISED

write the amount raised on the ball and 'pass it' onto the next business.

"The ball travelled around the UK covering thousands of miles and the momentum gained was exciting – it created a competitive culture of one business area wanting to raise more than the rest."

Cox Automotive's Group Board escalated the competition to greater heights in 2017 by conquering Yorkshire's Three Peaks Challenge – completing the 24-mile route and 5,200ft

ascent in under 12 hours.

Not to be outdone, an all-women team from the firm travelled to Tanzania the following year to tackle Africa's highest mountain, successfully summiting Kilimanjaro's 19,336ft peak.

And having demonstrated a head for heights, Cox Automotive continued its high-profile support of Wooden Spoon last year by sponsoring Ollie Phillips' involvement in the LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge.

STUDENTS SHOW OFF THEIR TRUE COLOURS

ALDRO School's support of Wooden Spoon stretches back far beyond the first days of its current crop of students.

Its annual Rugby Shirt Day – the brainchild of French teacher and rugby coach Yves Lomardot – began 16 years ago and has been a permanent fixture of the academic calendar since.

This January, the initiative, which invites

the Godalming school's students and staff to wear rugby tops of their choosing in exchange for a minimum £1 donation, raised £195.60 – taking Aldro's 16-year total to more than £5,500.

Deputy Headmaster Chris Rose, who is a long-standing member of the children's charity of rugby, said the enduring fundraiser has captured the imagination of

the whole school community.

He added: "This year we had all sorts of shirts on display, ranging from England World Cup and Lions shirts to club jerseys and local Guildford Boys RFC tops.

"Many clubs and nations were represented and some staff – including myself – even managed to squeeze into their old university shirts."



A DECADE OF DISTANCE

THIS year's Virgin Money London Marathon may be among the growing list of sporting spectacles temporarily sidelined by the coronavirus crisis, but Wooden Spoon's history books are already rich with runners who have conquered the capital's challenge. Over the past decade, hundreds have laced their running shoes and donned distinctive stripes to tackle the 26-mile tour of the city on behalf of the children's charity of rugby.

When the class of 2020 finally get the opportunity to put their hours of training into practice on 4 October, they will do so knowing that they are following in the footsteps of some fantastic fundraisers...

"I had my dad [Gloucester RFC legend and Wooden Spoon supporter Martin 'Speedy' Roberts, who died in April 2016] in the back of my head the whole way. He was so stubborn on fitness and training that I kept thinking I would have to get round because he would only have moaned at me if I didn't!"
– Becky Stroud-King (2017)



"Wooden Spoon was top of my list [of charities to run for]. The reason I chose this great charity is I have been involved in playing rugby for over 30 years and to see what the charity does for young disabled and disadvantaged children through the power of rugby was a great match."
– Andrew Mitchell (2016)



2010  2019
£304,074
RAISED BY RUNNERS



"Sunday was the best experience of my life! So much so that I doubt it can ever be bettered."
– Gareth Biddle (2019)

"It was such a great day! I really enjoyed every moment and am definitely interested in running next year too!"
– Lizzie Shand (2019)



"Every deep breath, every pain and ache felt while running the gruelling 26.2 miles was matched by the thought of the smiles and happiness that would be realised for the children. It was a privilege to help support Wooden Spoon."
– Richard Russell (2014)

➤ Fancy tackling an extreme event for the children's charity of rugby? Visit woodenspoon.org.uk/challenges to find out more.



FUNDRAISING GOES GLOBAL

WHEN it comes to showing its support for Wooden Spoon, Gullivers Sports Travel has not been shy about going the proverbial extra mile.

Over the last three years, the globe-trotting tour operator has flown the flag for the children's charity of rugby on three continents and raised £23,500 while travelling the world with its caring customers.

The company's fundraising journey kicked off in the Southern Hemisphere in 2017, when it arranged a charity clash against Wellington-based club Poneke Pies during the British and Irish Lions Tour of New Zealand. Gullivers Barbarians took to the field against their Kiwi counterparts wearing Wooden Spoon-sponsored shirts and the fixture was followed by an auction.

Poneke RFC also served as the starting point of a 305-mile cycle challenge – The Ride of

The Lions – which took a 50-strong peloton, featuring five former Lions and five former All Blacks, from the 2nd Test in Wellington to the 3rd Test in Auckland.

The focus of the fundraising then switched to the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan, where Gullivers conducted a series of successful bucket collections.

More recently, the UK tour operator carried on its championing of Wooden Spoon closer to home, selling merchandise, passing buckets and arranging auctions and raffles throughout the Six Nations Championship.

Reflecting on the multiple legs of the charitable campaign, Gullivers' Head of Sales and Partnerships Henry Kirchner said: "Raising awareness for such a fantastic charity that helps so many children with disabilities or facing disadvantage in the UK is fantastic to be associated with.

"It is easy to forget just how lucky we are and it is always nice to be able to give something back and I feel like we are helping make a difference.

"Our clients that attend our tours are always so generous in giving to Wooden Spoon and always agree on how much of an important cause it is.

"As a company filled with passionate rugby fans, the Gullivers team are very pleased to work alongside a charity that raises so much money for such great causes through using the values of the sport."

"As a company filled with passionate rugby fans, Gullivers are very pleased to work alongside a charity that raises money for such great causes"



EXPERIENCE IT LIVE
Gullivers
sports travel

**£23,500
RAISED**



AS SEEN ON



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WHEELS OF SUPPORT KEEP SPINNING

RUGBYTOTS relationship with Wooden Spoon may not yet span a decade but its team already has plenty to reflect on when it comes to fundraising feats.

Since pledging its support to the children's charity of rugby in 2015, the international play programme has raised a staggering £480,000 through its class Tryathlons and succession of ambitious cycle challenges.

Rugbytots' most recent foray on two wheels took a 43-strong peloton from London to Paris and followed previous leg-draining rides from Cardiff's then Millennium Stadium to Twickenham and the 323-mile route from Land's End to Twickenham.

The money raised has been used to support more than a dozen projects, including the creation of an outdoor gym at Farney Close School (page 31), and will benefit many more, but the firm's founder – Max Webb – is not intending to rest on his laurels.

The entrepreneur, who originally set-up Rugbytots to introduce his three sons – then toddlers – to rugby, has ambitious plans for the future.

"It's been absolutely fantastic raising funds for Wooden Spoon over the last four years and it's very humbling to see how these funds can help and support the lives of young



people who really need it," he said.

"We have sponsored horses for the Riding for the Disabled Association, built playgrounds and sensory rooms, provided much needed equipment to hospices such as cots and modified beds, converted a bus into an

"It's been absolutely fantastic raising funds for Wooden Spoon over the last four years and it's very humbling to see how these funds can help and support the lives of young people who really need it"

outdoor cookery school and helped to sponsor one of our coaches to break a world record playing rugby on Mount Everest. We regularly sit down with Wooden Spoon to discuss the ways in which the funds we raise can make a difference and this is a really important aspect of the relationship for me. It means we can marry up the spending to where it was raised in the first place, ensuring it goes back into the community.

"We are about to start planning for our 2021 fundraising event and my target for the end of 2021 is to have raised £750,000 for Wooden Spoon in total."

VALUED RELATIONSHIP GOES THE DISTANCE

DESPITE being an ever-present at Wooden Spoon's side since 1997, FedEx has not tired from going the proverbial extra mile to raise money for the children's charity of rugby. Last year, the logistics experts' total donations topped the £4 million mark and the company's support is showing no let up in pace.

Daniel Vines (FedEx Express Europe, VP – Inside Sales), for example, will be leading a squad of colleagues in his eighth Virgin Money London Marathon this autumn with the aim of raising a further £60,000.

Among those to have previously run alongside the

long-standing Wooden Spoon supporter is FedEx teammate Allan Wood.

"At 43 and as a novice runner I was given a fantastic opportunity to run the London Marathon, which had been a dream of mine since I was a small boy watching the stories unfold on TV," said last year's marathon-distance debutant. "I have been

involved as a player and coach at Tamworth Rugby club for a number of years and have seen firsthand what a difference rugby can make to children and adults. FedEx, my employer, sponsor the event and raise money for Wooden Spoon, so the pieces fell into place last year."

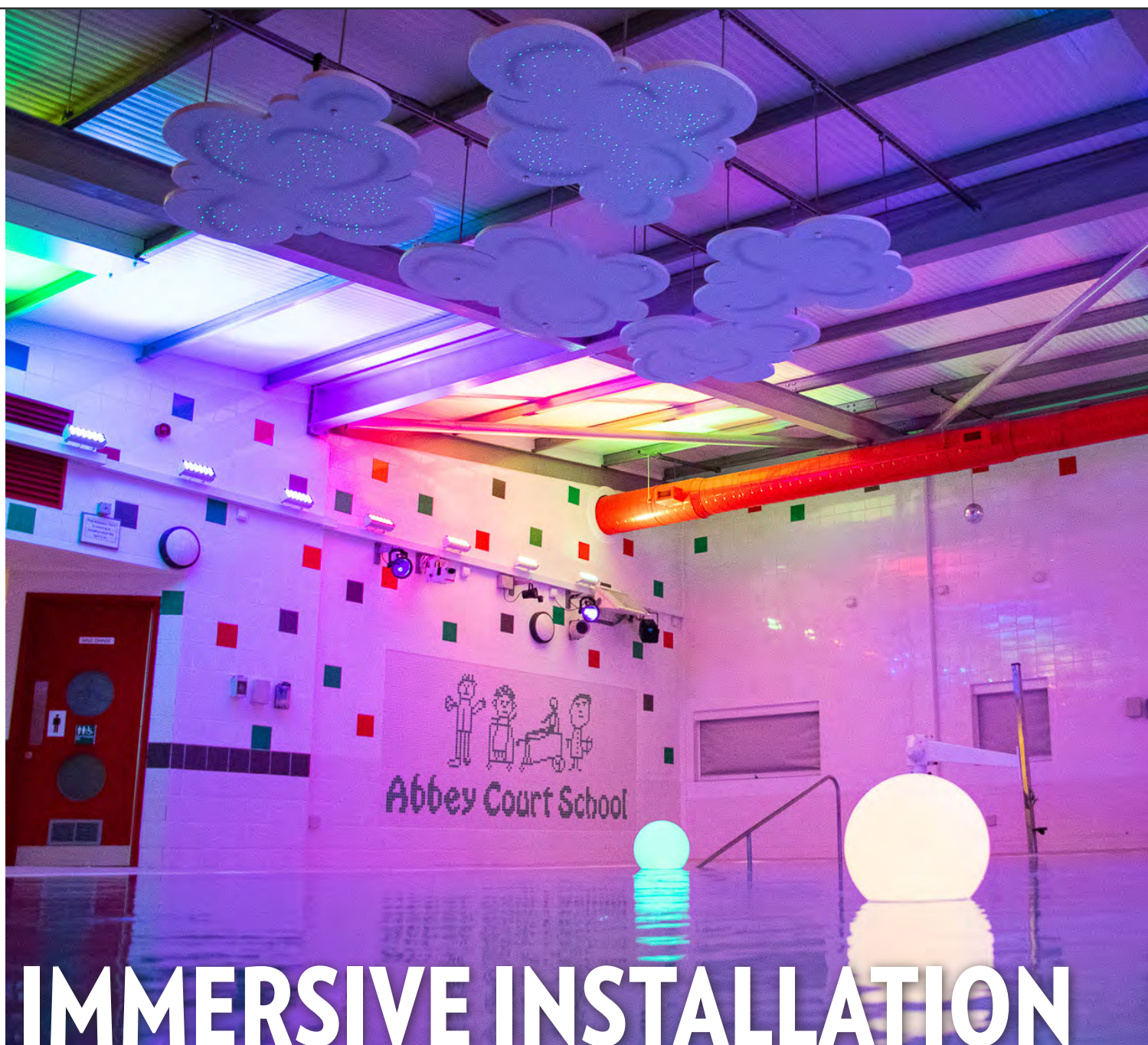
Running has been a consistent feature of FedEx's fundraising

delivery. A combined group of 40 runners from FedEx ran last year's London Marathon and a further ten staff laced up to complete the BADGERS Atherstone 10k Race in Warwickshire.

Reflecting on the latter, David Copping, Head of Continuous Improvement at FedEx, said: "Although this race was a huge challenge and the hills were very daunting, I was so pleased to run it and, of course, raise money for such a worthy cause."

More sedate fundraising activities have included charity breakfasts and taking part in dress-down Fridays.

£4,000,000
RAISED DURING 23-YEAR PARTNERSHIP



IMMERSIVE INSTALLATION

A STATE-OF-THE-ART hydrotherapy pool refurbishment funded by **Wooden Spoon Kent** has seen the popularity of swimming sessions soar at Abbey Court School in Strood.

The £25,000 facility revamp at the special school, which is for pupils aged three to 19 with severe and profound learning difficulties, has seen a raft of sensory equipment installed.

Completed during last year's summer holidays to minimise disruption, Abbey Court's pool now boasts colour wash lighting, projection effects, a bubble maker, LED clouds and sound system that have made the water an engaging and relaxing

"We could not provide all of the things that our very special pupils need and deserve without the support of funders. So on behalf of pupils, parents and staff, thank you Wooden Spoon."

place to play. The school worked closely with Mike Ayres Design, a company with more than 40 years of expertise building sensory facilities across the UK and Europe, to ensure the upgrade met the physical needs of its pupils and promotes their learning and development.

Whether being used to learn how to swim and gain confidence in the water or to enjoy greater freedom of movement, the pool has made a big splash with students, according to Abbey Court's staff.

Business Manager Linda Taylor said: "We are absolutely thrilled to be supported by Wooden Spoon. In the current financial climate, every penny is valued, and every



donation tremendously appreciated.

"We could not provide all of the things that our very special pupils need and deserve without the support of funders.

"So on behalf of pupils, parents and staff, thank you Wooden Spoon, it has been a pleasure getting to know you, and sharing a passion for enriching the lives of special needs children."

➤ To find out more about the children's charity of rugby and its support of community projects in your region or to discover how you can help positively transform young lives in your area, visit woodenspoon.org.uk/near-you

'A GREAT ASSET'

CHARLOTTE is a very knowing and sensitive young lady who has been diagnosed with Athetoid Cerebral Palsy and Dystonia. Her diagnosis means that her movements, particularly in her upper body, are uncontrollable and cause her to extend and flex her muscles constantly throughout the day.

Abbey Court's hydrotherapy pool enables Charlotte to relax all of her limbs and, during her hydro swims, she is fully free of her extensions and dystonic muscle spasms. The new equipment has further supported Charlotte to focus and respond as she spends time on her back in the pool due to her unsafe swallow.

The light up balls have developed Charlotte's enthusiasm and ability to move her body through the water to get to them. This has been hugely beneficial in helping Charlotte to strengthen her core muscles as she pushes the water to move towards the motivating objects.

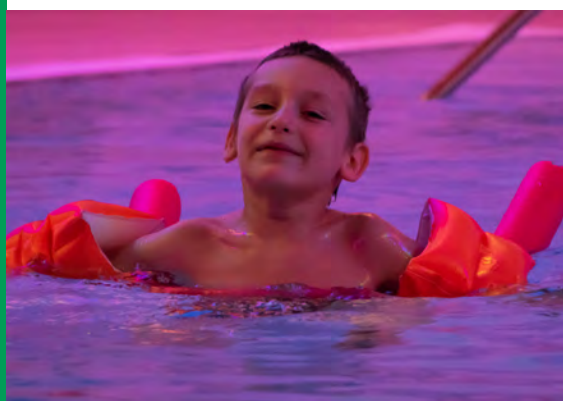
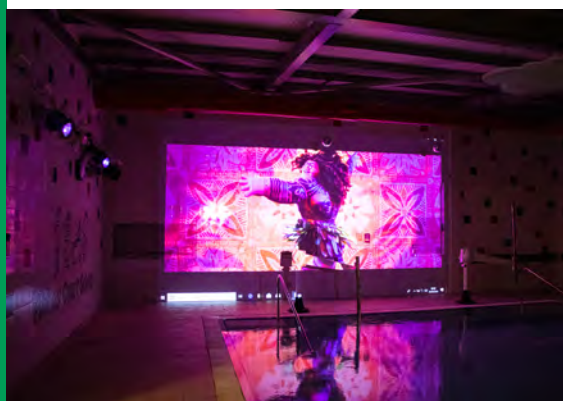
Charlotte's mum Kate told *Spoonews*: "The renovations and improvements to the hydrotherapy swimming pool have really enhanced the sensory experience of the sessions for the children.

"There are numerous aspects that can now be used simultaneously or individually depending on the needs of the session. These swimming lessons are vital to the health and wellbeing of the children both mentally and physically.

"My daughter Charlotte absolutely loves her swimming sessions, she really enjoys floating on her back looking up at the lights in the clouds – it helps her to relax, be able to stabilise her body and have more control over her involuntary movements."

Kate added: "Charlotte also enjoys playing games with her friends; chasing the light up, colour-changing balls around the pool encourages her swimming and social skills.

"The hydrotherapy pool is a great asset to the school and allows children of all ages and abilities to enjoy the facilities and the sensory experience together."

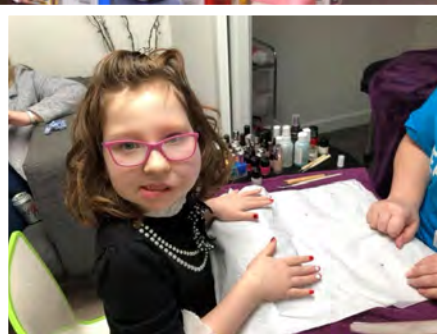




POD CASTS PLEASURE

FACILITIES funded by **Wooden Spoon Scotland** at Jak's Den in Livingston are proving a "godsend" for families with children with cancer.

Opened last summer by former Scotland and British and Irish Lions winger Roger Baird, a pamper pod and neutropenic café have become in-demand attractions at the charity's headquarters, which offers emotional, social and practical support to children and young people with cancer and related illnesses. The new additions are part of ongoing developments at the Den, which was inspired by Jak Trueman, who fell suddenly and seriously ill in August 2014 and lost his life to a rare and aggressive form of cancer five months later.



"We have had young people and mums and dads all excited about coming for some 'chill time' including massages, nail painting and hair curling"

Reflecting on the pamper pod's creation and the £42,000 of funding which made it possible, Allison Barr, Chief Executive of the Team Jak Foundation and Jak's mother, said: "Our Wooden Spoon Pamper Pod has been a godsend to our families with children

with cancer. We have had young people and mums and dads all excited about coming for some 'chill time' including massages, nail painting and hair curling. It's a real wee haven of peace and tranquillity while it also doubles as a counselling and small meeting room and it's been lovely to have our counsellors use it alongside one-to-one meetings with staff and supporters."

Allison added: "It really is a special place and we are so grateful to Wooden Spoon Scotland for giving us the opportunity to have the lovely pod."

The provision of pampering opportunities complement the drop-in centre's host of other activities, which include music therapy, counselling, alternative therapies, teen days – boasting Xbox and PlayStation challenges, coffee mornings, magic shows and homework support.

Jak's Den has a number of pop-up centres across Scotland and also provides an outreach service to homes and hospitals for those unable to travel.



“The wellbeing centre has been an incredible addition to our provision at Limpsfield Grange, providing us with a much needed space to run therapies for our students in a calm and beautiful environment”

SERENE SURROUNDINGS

A WELLBEING centre funded by Wooden Spoon Surrey is helping to bring a sense of calm to students at Limpsfield Grange School in Oxted, according to its headteacher.

Purchased and constructed using a £17,000 donation from the children's charity of rugby, the timber cabin serves as a chill out area for the all-girls school's 80 residential and day students, many of whom have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

Following the official opening of the project by John Inverdale,

Limpsfield's head Sarah Wild said: “The wellbeing centre has been an incredible addition to our provision at Limpsfield Grange, providing us with a much needed space to run therapies for our students in a calm and beautiful environment. We are really grateful to Wooden Spoon for supporting us with this project.

“The wellbeing centre gives the girls a space in which to develop strategies which help them to manage their anxiety, access occupational and speech therapies and to learn about how to stay well mentally and physically.”

TASTY ADDITION

YOUNG people in Suffolk can now fine tune their food preparation, baking and cooking skills thanks to a hearty £18,000 donation from **Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties**.

The new Learning Kitchen has been fitted at the Porch Project in Hadleigh, which engages with 11-to-19-year-olds in the town, Great Cornard and surrounding areas through social activities and educational and support programmes.

Woodbridge School in Suffolk helped the children's charity of rugby to fund the installation, raising more than £4,500 towards the total through the hosting of a gala dinner (see page 41).

Opened by John Winders, President of Eastern Counties Rugby Union, the kitchen will help teach vital life skills to those with physical, mental and social needs and enhance their employability.





CRAFTING CAREER CHOICES

A WORKSHOP built using an £18,000 donation from **Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties** will help sixth formers at Sidestrand Hall School in Norfolk to craft careers.

Created to advance students' carpentry, commerce and communication competencies, the Skills Pod provides pupils with the opportunity to work with locally-

sourced materials to produce products – such as garden furniture – to sell.

Complementing existing practical teaching areas at the school, which serves more than 180 seven-to-19-year-olds with complex educational needs, the Wooden Spoon workshop will boost students' chances of employment by introducing them to new trades and the basics of business.

In addition to creating greater capacity for craftwork, the Skills Pod is being used for yoga sessions, as a quiet place for students to relax in and individual therapy sessions.

Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties is planning to invite those pupils using the pod to perfect their manufacturing talents to provide outdoor furniture for an upcoming woodland walk project.

A NEW PLACE TO PLAY IN PEACE

A PLAY park promoting the children's charity of rugby's values of teamwork and inclusivity has been completed thanks to a £35,000 donation from **Wooden Spoon Ulster**.

The new outdoor facility at Ballycastle's Corrymeela Centre, Northern Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation retreat, was officially unveiled by Willie John McBride.

"As a player, I learnt how to

play well together with people from different backgrounds," said the Irish rugby legend during his visit to the centre, which welcomes more than 5,000 people each year and can count Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama and Prince Charles among its previous guests.

"I'm delighted to open this play park so thousands of children from all walks of life will be able to play together and

make new friends."

Tim Magowan, Corrymeela's Interim Executive Director, said: "We are so delighted to now have a wonderful play park which children and families can enjoy together.

"In our increasingly divided world, we're welcoming more and more people on site to learn how to build positive relationships with people from different backgrounds."

"Thousands of children from all walks of life will be able to play together and make new friends"



GARDEN GIFT DELIGHTS

A SENSORY garden funded by **Wooden Spoon Bedfordshire** has provided children at the Ridgeway School in Kempston with a safe environment in which to play.

Designed and built using a £15,000 donation from the children's charity of rugby, the outdoor facility allows those with complex care needs to explore physical activity with minimal supervision.

Helen Roy, Deputy Headteacher of the all-age school which provides education for pupils with physical, mental and associated learning and communication difficulties, said: "The children love the new sensory garden.

"They are vulnerable in the main playground, so it is nice for them to have their own area to play safely and independently."

Donations from marathon runners George Davies and James Wootton and the support of Pilgrims School in Bedford, which named Wooden Spoon

"The play area with its artificial grass is ideal for allowing access to the outside at all times of the year. Jaden is enjoying investigating the musical instruments and sensory panels enormously and is really benefiting from having an area in which he is free to explore. He is a very active child who loves to be outside in all weather.

"The sensory play area provides a wonderful safe, stimulating area in which our children with very complex needs can play and learn.

"I would like to thank Wooden Spoon for their generosity in funding our new sensory play area. The Bedfordshire region was very supportive." – Helen Roy, Deputy Headteacher



as its charity of the year, were key to ensuring the success of the project. Oliver Richbell, Chairman of Wooden Spoon Bedfordshire, said: "We are thrilled to be able to support

organisations in Bedfordshire, such as Ridgeway School, to enable children and young people with disabilities and facing disadvantage to have the opportunity to develop

and grow in such an amazing environment. We could not do this without the continuing support of our fundraisers – their generosity is what makes all this possible."



"We are thrilled to be able to support organisations in Bedfordshire to enable children and young people with disabilities and facing disadvantage to have the opportunity to develop and grow in such an amazing environment"



LAKESIDE OASIS OPENS FOR VISITORS

EVERY year up to 48 families – that would otherwise go without a holiday – will benefit from free breaks in the stunning surrounds of Lake Windermere thanks to **Wooden Spoon Yorkshire's** partnership with The Principle Trust Children's Charity.

The two charities combined to open the doors to a lodge on the White Cross Bay Park Dean Resort in the Lake District, which will be used as a retreat for underprivileged, disadvantaged and disabled children.

Purchased by The Principle Trust, the holiday home has been specially adapted for use by guests in a wheelchair or with a physical impairment using a £20,000 grant from the children's charity of rugby. The alterations include a wet room, the installation of sliding doors and ramps up to the cabin's front and side access doors.

Former England and British Lion wing Peter Squires, who officially opened the Principle

Trust's fifth lodge on behalf of Wooden Spoon, described the new addition to the portfolio as "such a worthy project".

He added: "The chalet looks fantastic both outside and inside, and is fully equipped and sorted to meet the needs of children with a disability or facing disadvantage, who I am sure will benefit hugely from it."

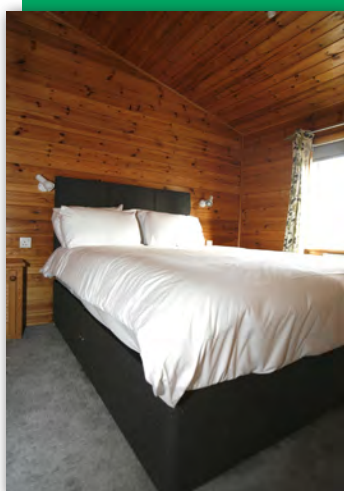
The rugby veteran, who was also a cricketer and played in 49

first-class matches for Yorkshire, was joined at the opening by Wooden Spoon Yorkshire chairman Stuart Watson and committee members John Little and Michael Coghlan.

Mike Davies, founder and trustee of the Principle Trust, said: "The £20,000 Wooden Spoon donated has allowed a complete refurbishment inside the lodge, making it wheelchair friendly, with a brand new

wet room, widened doors and laminate flooring throughout."

Those using the Windermere holiday home are selected by care organisations within Yorkshire, such as Embrace Child Victims of Crime and Hollybank Trust, which supports and educates more than a hundred children and adults through its special school, residential homes and adult daytime activity programme.



"The chalet looks fantastic both outside and inside, and is fully equipped and sorted to meet the needs of children with a disability or facing disadvantage"



New chapter: Peter Aldous was joined at the opening by Pakefield founders Tess Hardy and her husband John, Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties Chairman Seamus Farrelly and committee treasurer Alan Line



TRANQUIL TREAT

A BUSTLING activity centre serving some of Surrey's most socially-deprived young people now has a quiet corner thanks to the children's charity of rugby's committee in the county.

Wooden Spoon Surrey donated £12,000 towards the purchase and installation of a range of sensory equipment, which creates a welcoming environment for children with autism or other learning difficulties, at Croydon Legacy Youth Zone.

One of a network of venues run by OnSide, a charity planning to open similar hubs in the most underprivileged areas in the country to give young people somewhere safe and inspiring to spend their leisure time, the £8 million centre provides sporting, educational and career advisory services to more than 4,000 youngsters.

The Wooden Spoon Tranquillity Room, which was opened by John Inverdale, offers a retreat to those who need a break from the noise and hive of activity associated with large visitor numbers.

READY FOR RIDERS

A MUCH-loved stables and indoor arena given a new lease of life by **Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties** have been formally opened by Suffolk MP Peter Aldous.

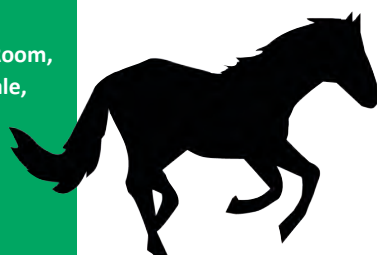
The children's charity of rugby donated £30,000 to rejuvenate Pakefield Riding School, which has served youngsters with a disability for more than half-a-century, and physically helped to complete the extensive overhaul.

Teaming up with experts from Fusion Community Initiatives, members of the Eastern Counties committee helped to

upgrade everything bar the roof of the 1960s facility at the Lowestoft branch of the Riding for the Disabled Association. The work included the creation of a new spectator gallery suitable for wheelchair users.

Pakefield Riding School was founded by Tess Hardy and husband John and was the first centre in the region to provide the physical and mental benefits of horse riding to the disabled community.

Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties' commitment to the centre began in 2017 when it purchased Moss, a Shire Clydesdale cross horse, for Pakefield's riders.



FUNDS FROM THE £125,000 RAISED BY 2017'S CLUB TOGETHER CYCLE CHALLENGE WERE USED TO BRING JOY TO RIDERS AT PAKEFIELD RDA



CONTEMPORARY CLASSROOM

A NEW state-of-the-art sensory classroom has brought learning to life for students at St Gerard's School in Belfast.

Funded by **Wooden Spoon Ulster**, the £35,000 immersive learning space represents a "wonderful resource" for the school, which caters for 300 children from the age of three to 19 who have a range of complex needs.

Principal Stephen Ramsey said: "We have put a state-of-the-art sensory room in and that is to meet the changing needs of our pupils. This is an immersive multi-sensory classroom and it has brought things to life for them. It can also be used as a calming

influence for some of our children with a range of complex needs.

"Some children find it difficult to emotionally regulate and this room will help with this.

"The school is so thankful to Wooden Spoon. Our students will really benefit from the impact of this wonderful resource that we now have."

The cutting-edge classroom was formally opened by Willie John McBride (pictured above right), who was joined for a tour of the school by fellow former Ireland international Tommy Bowe (above left) – a player boasting 63 caps for his country, including 11 as captain.

SENSORY SENSATION

A SENSORY room financed by Wooden Spoon Merseyside has become an integral part of a Liverpool school, according to its headteacher.

Louise Byrne, head of St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School, said the new facility – which was opened by former England and Liverpool footballer Sammy Lee – has quickly become an in-demand sanctuary for students.

"Some of our children come from areas of high deprivation and experience the ups and downs of life," she said. "Some experience a change in the family – the serious illness of a loved one, a bereavement or family breakdown.

"Up until now, we were limited as to how we could support them; finding a quiet space to talk was extremely difficult. We had nowhere dedicated to their needs but now children can come here [the sensory room] and find calm and peace."

Explaining the strains placed on the school's budget by an ageing building in need of annual repairs and redecoration, the head added: "Wooden Spoon stepped in and helped us provide something of quality. Without Wooden Spoon we would not have this room to meet our needs."

"Our students will really benefit from the impact of this wonderful resource"



FARNEY'S FIT FOR PURPOSE

OUTDOOR gym equipment funded by the children's charity of rugby and Rugbytots is proving so popular with students at Farney Close School in Bolney that a queue can often be found snaking from it.

The principal of the residential school for secondary age pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties said the new kit was being put to heavy use daily and was improving the children's health, self esteem and confidence working as part of a team.

"The outdoor gym equipment has been a tremendous asset to the school and all of our young people from year 7 to our 6th form have benefited from it," Sara Hack explained while thanking [Wooden Spoon Sussex](#) for its support.

"It has supported their curriculum based learning and sports curriculum, and this in turn has made the students aware of how

important a healthy lifestyle and fitness regime is."

Echoing the principal's views, PE tutor Clarence Haynes added: "The benefits of the equipment have been far reaching and support the curriculum based learning.

"The students enjoy the exercise and achieve and understand the reasons for using the equipment in regards to their health and fitness combined with other forms of exercise."

Honor O'Reagan, Farney Close's IT tutor, commented: "It is an important piece of equipment because it supports the students when they are feeling stressed and upset."

Formally opened by Wooden Spoon Sussex's Honorary President Bob Rogers, the fitness facilities are also receiving rave reviews from the students.

Year 8 pupil Kyle said: "I like the equipment because it is good and it helps you to get fit; even though I am not overweight it does me good."

Current Year 11 student Kieran concluded: "I really get a lot out of using this equipment – we all love it and enjoy working out on it. Thank you."

£480,000
THE AMOUNT RAISED TO
DATE BY WOODEN SPOON
PARTNER RUGBYTOTS

➤ Wooden Spoon Sussex has contributed more than £400,000 to projects, ranging from hydrotherapy pools to sensory gardens, in the county.

AMBIENT ADDITION PLEASES PATIENTS

A STATE-OF-THE-ART Ambient Experience Interventional Suite funded by **Wooden Spoon Yorkshire** is helping to reduce the anxiety levels of patients – and their parents – ahead of operations at Leeds Children's Hospital's new heart theatre.

The multi-sensory facility features soft lighting and audio visual equipment that can be used to project tailored content to help young patients, aged 0-16 years, relax ahead of clinical and surgical procedures.

Since its first use in May last year, medical staff have reported improvements in the happiness and wellbeing of those benefiting from the Ambient Experience. Many children request "room themes" – choosing calming lighting, music and images that distract them from the often unfamiliar experience of being surrounded by medical professionals.

One patient said: "Before I had my procedure, I went to an Ed Sheeran concert and missed 90 percent of it because I had one of my episodes. The doctor was aware of this and played Ed Sheeran as I waited. This made me feel happy."

Cardiac Anaesthetist Dr Carol Bodlani was also quick to commend the Ambient Experience, adding: "The staff absolutely love it and the children, and their parents, are all saying 'wow' when they go into the theatre. They are all so much more relaxed and happier."

The suite, made possible thanks to a £25,942 grant from the children's charity of rugby, was officially opened by Yorkshire Carnegie wing and former England star Tom Varndell (pictured centred right).

Sharon Milner, CEO of the Children's Heart

"In such a short space of time we are hearing the positive difference the distraction equipment is making towards patient anxiety, upon entering the theatre and leaving"

Surgery Fund, concluded: "The Ambient Experience is such a positive addition; it is proving to be a fantastic distraction to the older children, who are more aware of their environment and treatment.

"In such a short space of time we are hearing the positive difference the distraction equipment is making towards patient anxiety, upon entering the theatre and leaving. By funding this equipment, Wooden Spoon has helped to break through the significant anxiety barriers that were once impossible to change. The Ambient Experience is, and will no doubt continue to be, a positive addition to children living with congenital heart disease, for many years to come."

CALMING KIT COMMENDED

Filipa Ferreira, a Congenital Cardiac Intervention Nurse Specialist, said:

"I think the Ambient Experience is amazing. The equipment is really good, and we can connect Bluetooth and put music on for the teenagers when they ask for a special playlist, and that helps them feel less stressed. For small babies, the big screen with cartoons helps them as they focus on the screen and not everything around them, such as the equipment and medical staff wearing masks. This helps to

reduce anxiety and upset in the babies and provides a positive experience for them and their parents.

"The Ambient Experience has a positive impact on our workflow. As the experience is more relaxing and less stressful for patients, they are calmer and so go to sleep quicker. I think the Ambient Experience is good for everyone — staff, parents and patients."



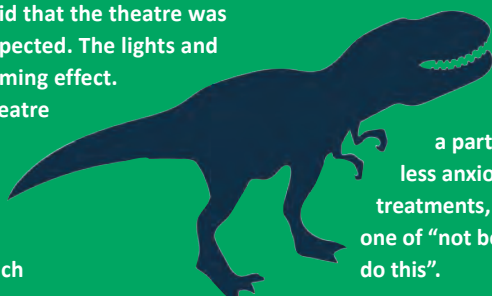
£25,942 DONATED



DINOSAUR DISPLAY A ROARING SUCCESS

In 2019, Joey, aged six, had two procedures in the new children's heart surgery theatre where the Ambient Experience is located.

Joey's mum said that the theatre was not what she expected. The lights and screen had a calming effect. Although the theatre was busy with lots of medical staff, the atmosphere felt relaxed, which



took away feelings of stress.

During Joey's first procedure he watched fish on the big screen. During the second he chose what he wanted to watch – images of dinosaurs. His mother said that the distraction provided by the Ambient Experience made him feel calmer and less anxious and helped him to build trust with members of the medical team.

She added that the Ambient Experience has definitely played a part in Joey feeling less anxious about further treatments, saying his attitude is one of "not being bothered – I can do this".



VennGroup

recruitment

Proud to be partnering Wooden Spoon. At Venn Group we make recruiting personal. We don't just fill jobs; our purpose is to create a positive impact.

Every year we choose a charity to partner and this year our director Robert Bowyer championed our selection of Wooden Spoon. Here is why:

"I first became aware of the Wooden Spoon Charity through my association with Sevenoaks Rugby Club. Initially, I would take part in local Wooden Spoon events such quiz nights and the Club Together day, cycling with a group of friends' from club to club, sharing stories and raising awareness and money for what can only be described as essential support for those that need our help.

When I reviewed our corporate charity support for 2020, I made the decision to move my personal support to one of a corporate nature, with the aim to raise greater amounts and support some of the wonderful Wooden Spoon projects.

Wooden Spoon are a fantastic cohort, they keep fund raising fun and challenging but above all else the money goes to some incredibly deserving cases, in truth it was an easy decision to make Wooden Spoon our corporate charity of the year."

About Venn Group

Our specialist teams are connected to the best talent in the UK and we are experts in providing the most suitable recruitment solution for your requirement. Whether this be a short term helping hand, a bridging interim, a new position or the creation of an entire project delivery team; we are committed to delivering a positive and cost effective outcome.

020 7557 7667

info@venngroup.com



THORDA is autistic and has complex sensory needs. He seeks sensory regulation through climbing and the new playground has given him the space and freedom to be able to do so safely. He particularly loves the climbing frame and slide. The playground has also provided Thorda with a spacious environment in which to interact with other children.

SEEDLINGS GIVEN CHANCE TO GROW

A SPECIAL school for children and young people with severe and profound learning difficulties in Preston is “fit for the future” thanks to a £25,000 donation from [Wooden Spoon Lancashire](#).

The children’s charity of rugby helped to fund a fully-equipped playground at Pear Tree School, which forms part of a new Early Years Centre for students at the start of their academic careers.

Explaining that children in the school’s Seedlings class now have a safe and modern place to challenge, stimulate and come to terms with their disability, Business Manager Fiona Wafer said: “You have given us a new place to play which is especially important at this early age for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

“Our leadership team stressed the importance of teaching in an outdoor area and we’ve been fortunate enough through your support to build this into our design. By having the financial support in place we have been able to build a range of different activity stations that will encourage more children to participate in outside explorative play.

“We now have a first-class Early Years Centre that is fit for the future while having a legacy worthy of your support. Each child’s journey is unique but Wooden Spoon’s contribution is making a real difference every day for so many children right now and in the years to come. Your support has made a positive impact and reached out to many of the families who need this level of support at the beginning of this life-long journey.”



REGIONAL REACH

Want to join our growing squad? Contact your nearest neighbour below and make a difference to the lives of children in your own community...

BEDFORDSHIRE

Chairman: Oliver Richbell
bedfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/bedfordshire

BRISTOL & BATH

Chairman: Bob Densley
bristolbath@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/bristol-bath

CHILTERN

Chairman: Ray Hague
chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/chilterns

CORNWALL

Chairman: Alan Milliner
cornwall@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/cornwall

CUMBRIA

Chairman: John Cunningham
cumbria@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/cumbria

DEVON

Chairman: Roger Haywood
devon@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/devon

DORSET & WILTSHIRE

Chairman: Brett Bader
dorsetandwilts@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/dorset-wiltshire

DURHAM

Chairman: Paul Tully
durham@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/durham

EASTERN COUNTIES

Chairman: Séamus Farrelly
eastern@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/eastern-counties

ESSEX

Chairman: Matt Mitchell (interim)
essex@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/essex

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Chairman: Rob York
gloUCEstershire@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/gloUCEstershire

GUERNSEY

Chairwoman: Karen Solway
guernsey@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/guernsey

HAMPSHIRE

Chairman: Tony Wilkin
hampshire@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/hampshire

HERTFORDSHIRE

Chairman: John Batters
hertfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/hertfordshire

ISLE OF MAN

Chairman: Allan Thompson
isleofman@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/isle-of-man

JERSEY

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woodenspoon.org.uk/jersey

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LEINSTER

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LONDON

Chairperson: Vacant
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MANCHESTER & CHESHIRE

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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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ULSTER

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WALES

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wales@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/wales

WARWICKSHIRE

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woodenspoon.org.uk/warwickshire

WEST MIDLANDS

Chairman: Martin Owen
westmidlands@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/west-midlands

WORCESTERSHIRE

Chairman: John Gibson
worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/worcestershire

YORKSHIRE

Chairman: Stuart Watson
yorkshire@woodenspoon.org.uk
woodenspoon.org.uk/yorkshire

Nowhere near you? If you would like to represent the children's charity of rugby in your area, please contact regions@woodenspoon.org.uk

Caught on camera: To watch a video on the official opening of Red Marsh School's Wooden Spoon Lancashire-supported project, visit our YouTube channel



MILESTONE MEAL SERVED

A FIVE-figure fundraising total and the attendance of rugby royalty helped to ensure **Wooden Spoon Lancashire's** 21st annual luncheon at the Village Hotel in Blackpool was marked in style.

The milestone meal, which was sponsored for a fifth successive year by Canaccord Genuity Wealth Management, saw 400 guests rub shoulders with the region's Honorary President, Sir Bill Beaumont, and broadcasting great Ian Robertson.

In addition to Sir Bill's tales from the Rugby World Cup in Japan, diners were entertained by comedian Mick Miller, master of ceremonies Joey Blower and music from Paul Dobie.

The scene for the fundraiser was set by students and staff from Red Marsh School in Thornton Cleveleys, who thanked Wooden Spoon Lancashire for partly funding a Sensory Sports Pad, which provides children with a safe and inclusive place to play and learn.

Thanks to the generosity of – among others – Leonard Dews and David Haythornthwaite, who donated an array of valuable auction items, the region raised a further £30,000 during the event, which will be used to support other worthwhile projects in the county.



**£30,000
RAISED TO DO
MORE LIKE THIS**

“Since the installation of the Red Marsh School Sensory Sports Pads, our pupils have thoroughly enjoyed learning outside of the classroom in these amazing inclusive spaces”
– Catherine Dellow, headteacher

GRATITUDE FOR GLYN

WOODEN Spoon Shropshire's long-standing chair Glyn Dobbs is retiring from the fundraising front row having put in place an “amazing” legacy. During his 14-year tenure with the children's charity of rugby, the benevolent volunteer has overseen a regional committee which raised more than £85,000 and funded 11 community projects.

Glyn's tireless efforts at the helm in Shropshire have been championed by Wooden Spoon CEO Sarah Webb, who said his loyalty and leadership had made a positive difference to the lives of thousands of young people and their families.

In a message of thanks to the outgoing chair, Sarah said: “Since our inception, Wooden Spoon has been indebted to volunteers like you who work tirelessly in the regions to raise vital funds to positively transform the lives of children and young people with a disability or facing disadvantage across the UK and Ireland through the power of rugby. We fully acknowledge and appreciate that the foundation of our success is built upon you, one of our valued volunteers, and your commitment to Wooden Spoon over the years.”

Glyn, who was presented with two engraved crystal tumblers in celebration of his steadfast service to the charity, will be especially remembered for his support of tag rugby for those with learning and physical disabilities. Recognising this dedication, Sarah concluded: “We hope that we can continue this fantastic legacy and will look to fund the festival in future years.”

BRISTOL & BATH BACK IN BUSINESS

SUPPORTERS of **Wooden Spoon Bristol & Bath** celebrated the region's relaunch in befitting style and surroundings – raising a celebratory glass and funds for the children's charity of rugby in the Heineken Lounge at Ashton Gate.

The event, which was generously backed by Bristol Bears and the Gallagher Premiership club's majority shareholder Stephen Lansdown, attracted a significant crowd from the sporting and business worlds.

Among those in attendance



were England's second most capped player of all time, Tamara Taylor; Bristol Bears Women's head coach Kim Oliver; and former Bath star Russell Earnshaw, who lifted the European Cup with the West



Country side before forging a coaching career. The trio all contributed to a lively Q&A session that tackled everything from International Women's Day and the Bears' fortunes on the pitch to the incredible highs of the

LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge. Former RFU President and Wooden Spoon Bristol & Bath's Honorary President Bob Reeves also took to the microphone to thank all those in attendance for their support of a day which delivered a succession of victories.

In addition to getting to see the Bears beat Harlequins 28-15, the region's results included a flurry of new committee members, volunteers, corporate sponsors and community partners, such as Millfield School.



MOORE THE MERRIER

FORMER England hooker Brian Moore helped to attract a sell-out crowd of 160 to **Wooden Spoon Cornwall's** fundraising dinner at Hotel Bristol in Newquay. The hooker-turned-broadcaster, who played in three World Cups and was voted Rugby World Player of the Year in 1991, was joined at the event by the region's Honorary President Martin Haag, chair Alan Milliner and a host of committee members.

The children's charity of rugby's Cornish contingent used the event to honour Keith Huxtable (pictured above with Brian) for his fundraising feats in memory of his son James – a former fly half of Redruth RFC and Taunton who was killed in an accident in 2018.

A number of James' friends attended the dinner and were among those to sign up to become a member of Wooden Spoon during the evening.

CLUBS' KINDNESS ON SHOW AT SPICY FIXTURE

TWO of rugby's renowned Johns joined forces at **Wooden Spoon Surrey's** third annual curry lunch. The event, which was hosted by partner club Old Reigatian RFC and open to members and supporters of the region's rugby clubs, united the talents of journalists John Inverdale and John Taylor to entertain 140 guests and raise almost £6,000.

Inverdale, Wooden Spoon Surrey's Honorary President, took the role of master of ceremonies while Welsh international flanker-turned-commentator Taylor shared stories of his time in both mauls and the media. The latter, who starred alongside greats such as Gareth Edwards and Gerald Davies as a player, was given a treat of his own by the region's committee, which – unbeknown to the speaker – arranged for his former Lions teammate Mike Roberts and old Scotland adversary Alastair McHarg to join him under the spotlight.

In turn, the children's charity of rugby were surprised with a £500 donation from the recently formed Renascentur Surrey Rugby Masonic Lodge.



Surrey curry's eye-watering numbers...

1 CURRY LUNCH
2 JOHNS
140 GUESTS
£500 CHEQUE

£6,000
BANKED





BRIGHT SPARKS

MORE than 40 teams exercised their grey matter in a bid to be crowned Wooden Spoon Wales' brightest brains at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff.

The strong field vying for bragging rights in the Sabre Computers and Town & Country Hotels-sponsored quiz could not, however, prevent Admiral from lifting the children's charity of rugby's trophy for a fifth successive year.

Teams representing Cooke & Arkwright & Swalec and Rawlings & Madley clinched the runners-up spots, finishing second and third respectively, during an evening which raised £3,000.

BBC presenter and Wooden Spoon Ambassador Phil Steele kept the quiz goers in check and entertained the audience with his tales from the touchline.

SWAPPING the dispensing of legal documents and advice for Lycra on behalf of **Wooden Spoon Wales** powered Capital Law to a four-figure fundraising total.

More than 50 cyclists saddled up for the Cardiff-based firm's second Giro D'Capitale and tackled distances of 30, 50 or 70 miles.

All those taking on the challenge were treated to a hearty breakfast by Capital Law before rolling off along one of the three routes, which traversed north Cardiff

and the Vale of Glamorgan. Members of the philanthropic peloton, who raised the magnificent sum of £2,650 for Wooden Spoon Wales, were rewarded with a celebratory curry on their return from their respective rides.

Huw Thomas, Chairman of Wooden Spoon Wales, said: "Our huge thanks go to Capital Law and all of the cyclists. The money raised, alongside the £3,000 raised by the first event, will help to transform young lives in Wales."



**2 CYCLE
CHALLENGES
IN 2 YEARS,
£5,650
RAISED**



**ALL SMILES
AT THE START**
Capital Law's cyclists in relaxed mood ahead of their second charity ride for Wooden Spoon. Find out more about the firm at capital-law.co.uk





Clash of sporting styles: Rugby's Lee Byrne shares the stage with cricket's Tony Cottey at Wooden Spoon Sussex's annual fixture

RAIN DOESN'T STOP PLAY

WHILE the English weather dampened any prospects of **Wooden Spoon Sussex** supporters seeing any heroics at the crease, the annual Cricket Meets Spoon Lunch at the 1st Central County Ground in Hove still managed to keep the children's charity of rugby's fundraising scoreboard spinning.

The event, held on the rain-soaked third day of Sussex Sharks' showdown with Worcestershire, attracted a full house of 230 guests, who dug deep to set a total of £7,000 for children in the county with a disability or facing disadvantage.

Those sitting down for the three-course lunch

were treated to intriguing insights into the world of rugby from former Wales star Lee Byrne, while the cricketing component of the speaking partnership was provided by ex-Sussex right-hander Tony Cottey, who took on the role of master of ceremonies.

The event included a lucrative game of Heads and Tails and featured a lively auction, which boasted prizes ranging from breaks in Barbados and Puerto Banus to a Christmas market cruise.

A spokesperson for Wooden Spoon Sussex thanked those in attendance for their generosity and praised Sam Mead, who works at the charity's national office, for her sterling support of the fixture.



0 MINUTES OF CRICKET, 2 SPORTING GREATS, 230 GUESTS AND £7,000 ON THE SCOREBOARD. HOWZAT?

'PIER' GROUP

A FESTIVE fish and chip lunch at the Palm Court Restaurant on Brighton Pier in December netted **Wooden Spoon Sussex** a bumper catch.

In its tenth year, the event was enjoyed by 150 diners who – representing rugby clubs from across the county and organisations such as Sussex Schools, Sussex Referees and Sussex CCC – raised more than £5,300.

Comedian Adger Brown, a long-standing friend and supporter of the children's charity of rugby, kept the Christmas crowd entertained and helped to reel in funds as host of the lunch's auction.

DONS DO DINNER

WOODEN Spoon Partner Club Wimbledon RFC continued its fantastic fundraising form with a sell-out dinner for 120 of its members and supporters. The event, which raised more than £5,000 for the children's charity of rugby's **Surrey** region, saw broadcaster John Inverdale entertain guests with a Leap Year-themed quiz.

The popular presenter, who is **Wooden Spoon Surrey's** Honorary President, was joined on stage by **Wimbledon's** rugby director, Collin Osborne. Providing an interesting insight into the tactics and techniques employed at rugby's elite level, the former member of Harlequins coaching line-up – and part of the 2012 Premiership winning team – also spilled the beans on the "trade secrets" of a number of high-profile players.

The money raised will be used to support youngsters with a disability or facing disadvantage in Surrey.

LONGLEVENS' TITLE CHALLENGE

WOODEN Spoon Partner Club Longlevens RFC is one of six grassroots rugby clubs vying to win a major national title.

In recognition of its commitment to inclusivity, the Gloucester-based team is on the short-list of contenders to clinch the inaugural Gallagher Rugby Club of the Season title.

Longlevens has been lauded for its mixed ability rugby project, which removes barriers for young people with additional needs wishing to join a mainstream club, and hosting a ground-breaking round robin tournament. The competition is supported financially by **Wooden Spoon Gloucestershire** and



is contested by three of the county's special schools – The Milestone School, Alderman Knight and Belmont School.

Insurance broker Gallagher, a title partner of Premiership Rugby, began its search for exceptional clubs that demonstrate a meaningful contribution to their local communities, late last year.

As a finalist, Longlevens will

receive a skills-sharpening training session with stars from Gloucester, Gilbert training equipment worth up to £1,000, and a Gallagher-led business-focused event to help the club and community off-the-pitch.

A public vote will be combined with the views of Gallagher ambassadors Ugo Monye and Danielle 'Nolli' Waterman to decide an overall winner and a prize that includes an enhanced Gilbert training bundle.

Longlevens Chairman and Wooden Spoon Gloucestershire committee member Christopher Yorke said: "It has always been our mission to get more young people enjoying rugby. Mixed ability rugby encourages social

inclusion, by removing the barriers to participation for people who feel unable to join mainstream clubs due to physical or mental health issues, age or disability. We're very excited to welcome Gloucester Rugby players to the club and are delighted to have had our efforts recognised by Gallagher."

Sarah Griffiths, Director of Communications for Gallagher in the UK, commented: "At Gallagher our mission is to help individuals and businesses face their future with confidence, which is why we particularly admire Longlevens RFC's desire to improve the confidence of young people from special educational needs schools by introducing them to rugby."

SUFFOLK SCHOLARS REVEL IN RUGBY LESSON

PUPILS, parents and staff associated with Woodbridge School in Suffolk were given a master class in all-things rugby by **Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties** and passed the test with flying colours by raising £4,500.

Teaming up with the children's charity of rugby resulted in students learning the tricks of the trade from England stars Ollie Phillips and Tamara Taylor, who also joined 36 pupils from Years 11-13 for a careers lunch.

The professional advice proffered by the Wooden Spoon ambassadors was complemented by Woodbridge's head of biology Dr Louise Rickard – a former international who won 112 caps for Wales and made more than 50 appearances for the Welsh Sevens side – and current parent and professional footballer-turned-talent acquisition company owner Michael Barrington-Hibbert.

Later in the day, it was the parents' turn to enjoy a feast of rugby as they were entertained during a gala dinner at the school by Ollie, Tamara and former British and Irish Lion and Scotland star Chris Rea.

Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties Chairman Seamus Farrelly helped to swell the



fundraising total by donating a host of rugby memorabilia for the evening's live and silent auctions, the proceeds of which went towards the funding of a new kitchen at The Porch in Hadleigh (page 25).

A spokesperson for Woodbridge said: "We wholeheartedly support the fantastic

work that the team at Wooden Spoon do. The support and encouragement of the ambassadors has also helped boost girls' rugby at the school – their determination and enthusiasm is catching and we hope that our contribution will further the great work which they do."



LIONS' ITALIAN JOB

PANDEMICS and travel bans will not hamper Stew Mel Lions' bid to complete its ambitious "miles to Milan" fundraiser on behalf of **Wooden Spoon Scotland**.

Italy may be officially off limits for the Edinburgh-based youth rugby club, but its coaches and players are set on covering the equivalent 1,200 miles without the need of a flight or ferry ride.

Instead, the Lions and Lionesses are eating up the miles by tracking the distances they cover walking, running, cycling or swimming.

"We've already done loads of miles," Adrian Graves, one of the club's coaches, told *Spoonews*. "The coronavirus may slow things down slightly but it won't stop us achieving our goal."

Explaining that the "destination" for the challenge was a salute to Stew Mel's annual tour to a club north of Milan, the former rugby union official added: "Collectively, we have already covered around 1,400 miles but the idea is for all three of the teams

competing in the challenge – the Reds, Blacks and coaches – to achieve the distance."

Adrian said that the club had set itself a stretch target of £10,000 for the fundraiser, which was officially launched by Scotland international Tim Visser (below), and that its young players had already held a car wash and packed bags at supermarkets to support the drive.

Stew Mel Lions has a rich heritage of raising money for the children's charity of rugby, but the miles to Milan initiative represents something of a step change in its tactics.

Adrian concluded: "I wanted to do something a bit different this year so that the kids themselves were more directly involved in the fundraising."

"By putting the onus on them, it helps them to be more aware of what Wooden Spoon does in our community and what it's all about. So rather than just giving Wooden Spoon a percentage of funds raised at a dinner or through a raffle or auction, the kids are doing the hard miles themselves."



A SALUTE TO SLATTERY

WHILE Fergus Slattery was not a founding member of Wooden Spoon, he can certainly lay claim to being a catalyst for the charity's creation.

As the scorer of one of two tries for Ireland in Dublin on 19 March 1983, the former British and Irish Lions star helped confirm

England's last-place standing in that season's Five Nations Championship and set in motion the events that unfolded later that evening (page 47).

Fergus may have been completely unaware about the impact his scoring exploits had on a group of five travelling England supporters, but he has played a full and knowing part in the children's charity of rugby's success story since.

Like Willie John McBride, his head coach on that fateful Dublin day, Fergus has been a steadfast supporter of Wooden Spoon for many years and has captained its Leinster region with aplomb.

And although he has recently stepped down as the charity's chairman in Ireland to make way for Niall Browne, his voluntary service is set to continue as honorary president.

"Fergus is – and forever will be – intrinsically linked with the children's charity of rugby, but his continued contribution is anything but a cameo appearance in its story," said Wooden Spoon's CEO Sarah Webb.

"He has been an ever-willing and loyal friend of Wooden Spoon and has helped us to raise significant amounts of money to positively transform the lives of young people."

"England supporters may not have been cheering his name in Dublin in 1983 but he has more than made up for breaking their hearts that day since."



EFFINGHAM'S ENDEAVOURS

WOODEN Spoon Surrey has offered its heartfelt thanks to members of Effingham Golf Club.

The generous golfers raised £32,730 for the children's charity of rugby through their 2019 Men's and Ladies' Captains Charity campaign, which will be used to support projects in the county. The donation follows the success of Wooden Spoon Surrey's golf day at Effingham last September – an event that holed more than £18,000.



Wooden Spoon
The children's charity of rugby



SAVE THE DATE!

Rugby Ball

DATE

Friday 20 November 2020

VENUE

The Landmark, London NW1 6JQ



BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY

woodenspoon.org.uk/rugby-ball

E: events@woodenspoon.org.uk

WIN!

DAZZLE US WITH YOUR KIT DESIGN

DO you have a fledgling fashionista or dynamic designer in the family? If so, we want to put their talents to the test! Wooden Spoon has partnered with O'Neills to give your child, grandchild, niece or nephew the chance to win a rugby shirt sporting their own design*. To stand a chance of winning, ask them to show off their style using the template below (or by downloading a copy at woodenspoon.org.uk/rugby-shirt-competition), complete your details and return a photo or scan of this page to: charity@woodenspoon.org.uk

*The manufacturer reserves the right to adjust the final design



Designer's name: _____

Email address: _____

Designer's shirt size (S, M, L, XL): _____

Date of birth: _____

Parent/guardian's name: _____

Town: _____

Contact number: _____

Would you like to receive enews updates from Wooden Spoon?*

YES ☐ NO ☐

*available for over 18s only

The data you've provided will be used by Wooden Spoon to send you emails about behind the scenes news, updates about our events, general information about our work, volunteering and various ways you can support us. You're free to change your mind at any time. Visit woodenspoon.org.uk/privacy-policy for more information.

o'neills

SINCE 1918

COMING UP

From golf days to cycle rides, our regions host a huge range of exciting events each year.
Below is a snapshot of dates for your diary – visit woodenspoon.org.uk/events for a full list

ORIGINALLY 4 JUNE

Ulster
Ulster 25th Anniversary Dinner
Sold out - rescheduled for 21 October

12 JUNE

Kent
West Kent Golf Day
kent@woodenspoon.org.uk

Sussex (now rescheduled, date TBC)
Sussex Golf Day
sussex@woodenspoon.org.uk

15 JUNE

Chilterns
Chilterns Golf Day
chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk

19 JUNE

Essex
Essex Golf Day & Rugby Clubs Championship
essex@woodenspoon.org.uk

25 JUNE

Wales
Wales Golf Day
wales@woodenspoon.org.uk

26 JUNE

Gloucestershire
Gloucestershire Summer Ball
gloucestershire@woodenspoon.org.uk

Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire Golf Day
nottingham@woodenspoon.org.uk

1 JULY

Northamptonshire
Northamptonshire Golf Day
northampton@woodenspoon.org.uk

3 JULY

Staffordshire
Staffordshire Golf Day
staffordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk



PING[®]
PLAY YOUR BEST[®]

With golf a major driver when it comes to fundraising, Wooden Spoon would like to thank PING for pitching in and supporting the children's charity of rugby's busy calendar of golf days with merchandise.

17 JULY

Kent
East Kent Golf Day
kent@woodenspoon.org.uk

21 AUGUST

Kent
Kent Rugby Club Golf Challenge
kent@woodenspoon.org.uk

3 SEPTEMBER

Leicestershire
Leicestershire Golf Day
leicester@woodenspoon.org.uk

4 SEPTEMBER

Eastern Counties
Eastern Counties Golf Day and Dinner
eastern@woodenspoon.org.uk

11 SEPTEMBER

Shropshire
Shropshire Golf Day
shropshire@woodenspoon.org.uk

Yorkshire
St George's Day Dinner
yorkshire@woodenspoon.org.uk

16 SEPTEMBER

Surrey
Surrey Sportsman's Dinner
surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk

Sussex
Cricket Meets Spoon Lunch
sussex@woodenspoon.org.uk

24 SEPTEMBER

Scotland
Aberdeen Dinner
scotland@woodenspoon.org.uk

1 OCTOBER

Scotland
Edinburgh Golf Day
scotland@woodenspoon.org.uk

National
Rugby Club Golf Challenge Final

events@woodenspoon.org.uk

2 OCTOBER

Hertfordshire
Hertfordshire Golf Day
hertfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk

Leicestershire
Leicestershire Oktoberfest
leicester@woodenspoon.org.uk

3 OCTOBER

Dorset & Wiltshire
Dorset & Wiltshire Veterans Tournament
dorsetandwilts@woodenspoon.org.uk

4 OCTOBER

National
Virgin Money London Marathon
events@woodenspoon.org.uk

9 OCTOBER

Surrey
Surrey Regional Golf Day
surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk

17 OCTOBER

Manchester & Cheshire
Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Nunshigum 1944 Dinner
manchester@woodenspoon.org.uk

20 NOVEMBER

National
The Rugby Ball
events@woodenspoon.org.uk

8 DECEMBER

National
Scrum Dine With Me
events@woodenspoon.org.uk

For a full list of fundraisers and charity challenges, check out our website at woodenspoon.org.uk/events

All events are subject to change due to COVID-19, in line with government guidelines



REWARDING RELATIONSHIP

OFFICIALS at Ballyclare RFC are well-placed to boast about the mutual benefits of becoming a Wooden Spoon Partner Club.

Having been given a firm financial shoulder of support by the children's charity of rugby last year to stage an international tag rugby festival that featured more than 1,500 players, the Northern Ireland-based team recently returned the compliment by raising funds for **Wooden Spoon Ulster** at its annual president's dinner.

The event was headlined by former Ireland and British Lions star Ronnie Lamonth and raised £1,300 – adding to the £2,500 already donated by the Ballyclare-based club.

Club President Cliff Gilmore said: "I was particularly pleased that Ronnie could attend. As a local Ballyclare resident he is often seen at our home games but is seldom heard recalling his memories of the 1966 Lions Tour to New Zealand.

"He kept us enthralled with his stories and went to each table with his Lions cap – allowing people to put it on – and take photos with him.

"It was a truly memorable evening."

The dinner and resulting donation to Wooden Spoon has put Ballyclare in contention of winning the inaugural Irwin Mitchell PCP Cup.

Recognising the fundraising endeavours of Partner Club Programme members, the trophy – and a cheque for £750 – will be presented in September.

➤ It's not too late to nominate your Wooden Spoon partner club for the Irwin Mitchell-sponsored prize.

To stand a chance of scooping the silverware, send a paragraph highlighting a fundraising event you have held on behalf of the children's charity of rugby to rugby@woodenspoon.org.uk

PARTNERING UP

WE WANT to invite you to bolster our squad, and benefit yours, by joining the Wooden Spoon Partner Club Programme, which is supported by Irwin Mitchell.

By teaming up, we can raise funds for both your rugby club and projects for children with disabilities or facing disadvantage in your area.

Open to all rugby clubs in the UK and Ireland, the programme provides an opportunity to work with Wooden Spoon to change children's lives and secure mutual long-term gains through joint fundraising initiatives.

Partner clubs will benefit from the charity's promotional prowess, merchandise, cost-saving savvy, celebrity contacts and strong links with the wider rugby community.

➤ Find out more at woodenspoon.org.uk/rugby-clubs

90 PLUS CLUBS
HAVE SIGNED
UP TO DATE



proud supporters of the Partner Club Programme

"Ronnie is often seen at our home games but is seldom heard recalling his memories of the 1966 Lions Tour to New Zealand"

HONOURING FAMILY TIES

WHEN it came to choosing which charity she should run this year's Virgin Money London Marathon for, Rachael Hucker had no hesitation in nailing her colours – those of Wooden Spoon – to the mast.

Her allegiance to the children's charity of rugby's distinctive swatches, and stripes, is understandable, given they were picked by her late grandfather Fred Hucker.

Fred (80), who passed away last year, was one of Wooden Spoon's founding members and served as a trustee for two decades. He was the brains behind the charity's early and enduring branding – designing its instantly-recognisable tie – and instrumental in establishing Wooden Spoon as a force for good.

"It was the only choice," Rachael told *Spoonews* of her decision to raise funds for the children's charity of rugby. "I wanted to do something in memory of my grandad and Wooden Spoon was so important to him. Running the marathon and raising funds for the charity is my way of remembering him and continuing his legacy.

"It's been a big part of my family's life – I grew up hearing stories of the Wooden

Spoon balls my parents and grandparents went to.

"You realise more as you get older what your grandparents have done for people and Wooden Spoon is a big deal, what my grandad has done is huge. I am immensely proud to know how many people's lives he touched in his lifetime."

While a familiar face on the hockey pitches of Bicester, Rachael concedes that running is not a usual part of her sporting repertoire.

"I am shiny new when it comes to marathons and races," she added.

"My dad was actually a very good runner and does marathons for fun, whereas I basically run on a hockey pitch and only then if I have to.

"A few niggles and aches and pains mean that I've not been able to run as much as I would have liked in preparation.

"I have done a half-marathon trail run though, which was horrible and very hilly, and was able to do it so I'm sure it's going to be okay."

Having lost a bet over how much sponsorship she could attract in a 24-hour period, the amateur runner is also facing the prospect of lining up at the start line in fancy dress.

"I said I'd run wearing a spoon outfit, but it's proving quite hard to find one and I may have to get someone to make me one," she said. "My compromise might be getting some personalised leggings with spoons on them, but I am on the hunt for a proper costume."

Regardless of her race-day attire, Rachael is not setting herself any hard and fast goals for her marathon debut.

"The plan is to finish," she concluded. "It is not about speed or timing for me but just doing it."

Given the tenacity of her grandfather, few would bet against Rachael earning her stripes this October.

➤ To sponsor Rachael, visit justgiving.com/fundraising/rachael-c-hucker



Following Fred Hucker's death last year, fellow founder Peter Scott told *Spoonews* about the pivotal part the former Managing Director of Bell Lines Ltd played in Wooden Spoon's ongoing success story.

"It was a group of Fred's Irish contacts who presented us with a small wooden spoon, which was the catalyst for the birth of the charity," explained Peter, recalling the events of an evening in Dublin following Ireland's victory over England in the 1983 Five Nations Championship.

"The five of us on that trip agreed to play a round of golf to decide which of us would own this trophy. It was also agreed that we would invite others along and more than 100 players eventually took part in the event at Farnham Golf Club.

"When Fred, who was not a golfer, heard what we were doing, he decided we should have a special tie for the event and designed and had made 10 of the ties that are now well known.

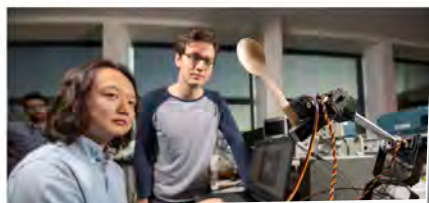
"Amazingly, around £8,500 was raised that day and almost all present wanted a Wooden Spoon tie. The success of that event, coupled with the tie, heralded the birth of Wooden Spoon."

"You realise as you get older what your grandparents have done for people – what my grandad has done is huge. I am immensely proud to know how many people's lives he touched"

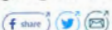


Lifestyle Christmas

How charity is helping to invent a 'universal controller' that gives disabled people independence



Wheelchair rugby gave my life purpose after a car crash



'The hospice feels like our baby's home – because we never got the chance to take him to ours'



James and Precious Robinson: 'We light a candle for Raphael every day' © BBC News

Princess Anne: 'You don't need qualifications to make a difference'



After a road accident, I had to learn to walk again before I could take part in the London Marathon



Why wheelchair rugby is the most brutal, entertaining and uplifting sport you'll ever play



When a player is freed of a defensive lock, they can forward towards their opponent's goal line

HEADLINE ACT

WHILE readers of *Spoonnews* and rugby lovers will be only too familiar with the life-changing work of Wooden Spoon, a national newspaper helped to introduce the charity to millions more over the festive season.

Selected as one of three charities to be supported by *The Telegraph's* annual Christmas appeal, the children's charity of rugby enjoyed exposure across the paper's weekday and weekend editions, as well as its website and social media channels.

The coverage included an interview with our patron, HRH The Princess Royal, and features focusing on some of the projects to have benefited from Wooden Spoon support, including Richard House Children's Hospice in London, which offers palliative care to youngsters with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions.

Some of the hospice's state of the art facilities, including the Rainbow Suite, a private room cooled so families can spend time with a child after they pass away, are part funded by Wooden Spoon.

The children's charity of rugby's investment in pioneering research of a universal

**17 STORIES, READ
BY 3,229,238
PEOPLE, HELPED
TO RAISE...
£164,254.39**

controller designed to give people with disabilities greater independence was also showcased, as was Wooden Spoon's backing of a flight simulator which tours youth centres across the UK, providing young people with disabilities a new experience.

Among others put in the media spotlight were members of the Solent Sharks squad, who impressed the important impact of Wooden Spoon's support of wheelchair rugby, and Allan Wood, an employee of corporate sponsor FedEx who has continued

to fundraise for the charity despite sustaining life-changing injuries in an accident.

Reflecting on the campaign of heart-warming and inspirational stories, which helped to raise more than £164,000, Wooden Spoon CEO Sarah Webb said: "We are absolutely thrilled with the amount raised by *The Telegraph* Christmas Charity Appeal.

"It was an exciting project from start to finish. *The Telegraph* team were so professional and committed to the appeal and their readers have been so generous.

"We will be looking at using the money to fund national initiatives that change the lives of children and young people living in local communities across the UK.

"To demonstrate the impact this money will have, £5,000 could fund a rugby wheelchair giving a young person with a disability access to sport, £14,000 could fund a playroom for vulnerable children to help provide them with emotional support and £25,000 could fund an adventure playground allowing children with disabilities the opportunity to learn key skills through play.

"It is a phenomenal amount of money and we are absolutely delighted."

"The Telegraph team were so professional and committed to the appeal and their readers have been so generous"

FIJIAN FORAY FOR FUNDRAISER

AS SEVENOAKS student Harry Goodwin discovered in front of a crowd of 51,000 at Twickenham, one good turn deserves another.

The Solefield School pupil was picked to represent Wooden Spoon at last year's Kilik Cup, joining Fiji's line-up as a mascot for their thrilling 33-31 victory against the Barbarians. Harry's walk onto the Twickenham turf alongside lock Tevita Naqali followed Solefield's selection of the children's charity of rugby as the beneficiary of its U11 Rugby Festival.

The event, which took place in February after healthy pre-tournament sales of the charity's striped socks and included a raffle featuring a shirt signed by England Sevens star Phil Burgess, raised more than £1,200 for **Wooden Spoon Kent**.

"After hearing about Wooden Spoon and the fantastic work they do in providing opportunities for children with disabilities or facing disadvantage, my school decided that it would love to raise money to help the cause at its Under 11s rugby tournament," explained Harry.

"Before the tournament itself we raised money by selling Wooden Spoon socks and every team that played wore them."

The honorary Fijian (pictured above centre), who played in the Solefield tournament, added: "The Wooden Spoon woolly hats were also very popular with



the students and staff and a Wooden Spoon teddy bear has been a great addition to our school's office.

"It was my job – with the help of my mum and brother – to sell as much merchandise as I could. We also carried around a bucket and the supporters were happy to donate to such a worthy cause – by the end of the day my arms were extremely tired from carrying around a heavy bucket!"



Of his Twickenham treat, Harry concluded: "I had the best day walking out onto the pitch. I'd like to thank Wooden Spoon for giving me the opportunity as it was a day I will never forget."

➤ To sign your school up to pull up its striped socks for the children's charity of rugby or for other fundraising ideas, visit woodenspoon.org.uk/schools



PROGRAMME CONTINUES TO 'HITZ' THE RIGHT BUTTONS

A YOUNG man suffering from crippling anxiety and depression has credited HITZ – an award winning education and employability programme sponsored by Wooden Spoon – with helping him to turn his life around.

Callum Pope is currently exploring a potential career in print after his engagement with the HITZ team in Exeter and – as one of thousands of 14 to 18-year-olds helped each year – is keen to champion its transformative impact to others.

"Life before HITZ was somewhat repetitive and flat," said Callum who was bullied throughout his early school years for being overweight and struggled to find a job after finishing college.

"The issues I faced spanned from having sleepless nights worrying to having multiple panic attacks for days and days in a row. A lot of my time was spent residing in my bedroom with very little contact with the outside world, including family.

"I believed I had no way of picking myself up again after being pushed down for so long. I have been through a lot of traumatising experiences in my life, but instead of letting these weigh me down any longer, I am fighting back and Exeter HITZ has provided me with the motivation and drive to do so."

Describing the impact HITZ and his mentors have had on him, Callum continued: "I have never had a day during which I have felt useless or like I have no worth. HITZ has provided me with a positive community around me, full of like-minded individuals who thrive each and every day and I love seeing them progress through the start of their lives as young adults.

"If I had it my way, I would never leave the programme. From flag duty at Sandy Park to sports tournaments, if I could relive these last five months of my life then 100 percent I would do so. I never thought I would be wishing I didn't have to leave education."



With work experience arranged by the programme Wooden Spoon has supported since 2009, when it funded a pilot scheme targeting young people in London boroughs identified as crime and anti-social behaviour hot-spots, Callum now has a clear view of how his future may pan out.

"My plan is to continue with my work experience at a screen printing company and eventually turn this into paid work," he added. "This will give me the aid needed to kick-start my – and my partner's – lives and enable us to think about property, children and nice vehicles in a few years' time."

Callum, who commended his HITZ mentors Andy Bassett, Louie Griffiths and Gareth Williams for their contribution in his turnaround, concluded: "I am forever in all of your debts.

"As I take this next step in my life, I have no shame in admitting to the nerves and anxieties I am facing. However, I do know I have the entire Exeter HITZ programme with me every step of the way and that if I am worried about something, someone is always there to talk to me.

"I want to remind everyone that it really is okay not to be okay.

"Even if there is a time that you feel you cannot continue your life with the way it is going, you can always fight back from it. Exeter HITZ has shown me a light that I thought would never be visible."



JOSH Screech – the winner of the Wooden Spoon-sponsored "Young Achiever" accolade at the 2019 HITZ Awards – was also full of praise for a project that gives new hope to young people by guiding them back to education, vocational training, apprenticeships and employment. He said: "It changes you as a person for the better. I have experienced so many different things in my time at HITZ. I have achieved getting back into sports at New Cross RFC. I have been able to get back to doing folder work to a good standard. HITZ has saved me and I couldn't be happier. It's a life changer."

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Life, like a game of rugby, is full of ups and downs. Whatever happens, if you need legal advice or support, we're here.

So you're able to focus on what really matters.