

AUTUMN/WINTER 2019

# SPOONNEWS

## HISTORY MAKERS

Five fantastic  
feats of rugby  
move goalposts

## FRENCH FORAY

Cyclists conquer  
cross-Channel  
challenge

## *WORLD CUP WISDOM*

Home nation heroes share  
their tournament tips



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# TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE CHANGING LIVES

**A**LTHOUGH usually reserved to describe the frequent fluctuations in the fortunes of football teams and politicians, 'a week is a long time in...' could be applied to almost any aspect of life.

Rugby fans will certainly be able to relate to the phrase this autumn as the World Cup fixtures come thick and fast. As echoed by our home nation heroes in this edition (pages 9-15), the battle to lift the Webb Ellis trophy in Japan is too close to call and a single defeat in the pool stages could be enough to consign nations to an early exit.

Of course, fates can flip much faster than in the space of a week. Just ask the Rugbytots riders who experienced an extreme heatwave midway through their three-day London to Paris cycle challenge in aid of Wooden Spoon (pages 24-25).

Being on a bike – and committed to covering marathon distances – is the last place you want to be in 40 degree heat and the Paris-bound peleton must have been delighted when the weather proved characteristically changeable and cooled for their final push to the French capital.

Given how much can alter in a single week, day or 80-minute match, we decided to use this issue of *Spoonnews* to check in on some of the projects we supported during the last World Cup and to track the transformations possible over a four-year period.

I'll leave you to judge the long-term impact Wooden Spoon has had in each case (pages 8-14), except to say these

accounts demonstrate that every donation – no matter how big or small – made to the children's charity of rugby really does make a difference.

TNT (pages 50-51) and Rugbytots remarkable enduring support – and the commitment of lead ambassador Ollie Phillips (page 5) – are, however, evidence that some things can remain reassuringly similar during a World Cup cycle.

In 2015, we sent our Sevens supremo to an extreme environment to break a world record and in 2019 we exposed him to more of the same (page 20) – albeit at a much higher altitude!

One constant over the past four years has been the passion our volunteers, members, regional committees, fundraisers and corporate partners have for the work Wooden Spoon does to help improve the lives of children with a disability or facing disadvantage.

Regardless of the role you play in making this charity great and what you get up to ahead of 2023, I can assure you that your support will always be hugely appreciated. As ever, thank you and enjoy the issue.

Sarah Webb  
Chief Executive Officer





# Wooden Spoon

The children's charity of rugby

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## oneills

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# PROUD TO BE AT THE PEAK

**A**S IS befitting any team worth leading, I've had to put in some incredibly hard yards before being given the captaincy of Wooden Spoon as its new lead ambassador. Indeed, my journey to captaining England Sevens was a relative walk in the park compared to the physical trials I have faced for the children's charity of rugby during the past few years.

Interviews for a job certainly don't come much tougher – or colder – than helping to break world records by trekking to the North Pole and scaling Mount Everest and it has been a process that has exposed my body to some harsh extremes.

The powers that be at Wooden Spoon certainly seem to like seeing me suffer in sub-zero temperatures, but – all joking aside – the prize has certainly been worth the pain.

It is a massive honour and privilege to have been asked to take on the role of lead ambassador for a charity I have been incredibly close to for more than 15 years. The decision to stick around and immerse myself further was a very easy one.

I have always felt incredibly lucky to be involved with an organisation that is rightly recognised as the children's charity of rugby – a sport that remains an integral part of my life – and becoming a parent myself has only intensified my passion for its work. I can recognise some of the hardships faced by families with a child who has a disability and youngsters facing disadvantage and seeing first-hand how Wooden Spoon has such a positive impact on so many lives, both nationally and regionally, is one of the reasons I want to do more and shout about the charity from the rooftops.

The people who make these fantastic things happen are another. The charity's greatest privilege and its most powerful asset is access to an army of willing volunteers. Expeditions such as the LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge are testament to this. A 25-strong group of incredibly generous and caring people gave up a huge amount of their time to raise a huge amount of money for, and raise awareness of, a charity that means as much to them as it does to me.

And they represent just a small percentage of the thousands of volunteers who come forward every year to help run projects, fundraise and host events for the charity – these people are the beating heart of everything that is great about Wooden Spoon and I am proud to have them as teammates.

Leveraging my sporting past, I hope to further bolster this winning squad; helping to influence and introduce more and more current and former rugby players and sponsors into the mix. Corporate partners can help provide additional muscle and I have no doubt that companies will be keen to champion and support some of the tremendous work already under way.

Helping to set a strategy that will positively change the lives of even more people across the UK and Ireland will be a key function of my new role, but that doesn't mean I intend to hang up my thermals any time soon. My love for getting my hands dirty has not diminished and rest assured, should another adventure come calling, my snow boots will be ready!

Ollie Phillips  
**Lead Ambassador**

## WHAT MAKES WOODEN SPOON

In the UK & Ireland, 7 per cent of children live with a disability and 30 per cent live in poverty. This can lead to reduced life opportunities, less access to play, learning and sport facilities and reduced self-confidence. Our vision is that through the power of rugby every child and young person, no matter what their background, has access to the same opportunities. We want children to be children. Every year, we fund around 70 life-changing projects, from community programmes and specialist playgrounds to medical treatment centres and sensory rooms but the need is growing and there is so much more we can do. Please support us and help us change children's lives for the better. Our unique funding structure helps us to ensure that every penny you raise in your local area will fund projects locally, enabling you to see the impact you are having on children and young people living near you.

03/07/2019

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Four years on: The Wooden Spoon Spider Therapy Room in Bromley, Kent remains a sought-after suite in the south of England

PUBLISHED BY TYLERBALE COMMUNICATIONS

Email: [info@tylerbale.co.uk](mailto:info@tylerbale.co.uk)

Tel: 01252 714 870

Write: 10 Borelli Yard, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7NU

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WOODEN SPOON – THE CHILDREN'S CHARITY OF RUGBY

Email: [charity@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:charity@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Tel: 01252 773 720

Fax: 01252 773 721

Write: Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 2UZ

Contact details for our regions can be found online on page 29 and at [woodenspoon.org.uk/near-you](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/near-you)



# STRONG WEB OF SUPPORT

State-of-the-art Wooden Spoon Spider Therapy Room withstands the test of time



## WHO

Wooden Spoon Kent

## WHERE

The Freddie Farmer  
Physiotherapy Centre

## WHAT

A therapy room

## HOW MUCH?

£25,000

## THEY SAID

*"The donation went a long way and allowed us to source the equipment and facilities we needed"*

ENGLAND's rugby team and the Freddie Farmer Foundation, a Kent-based charity providing therapeutic exercise programmes for children with disabilities, have both excelled over the past four years.

Under the stewardship of head coach Eddie Jones, the former have exorcised the ghost of 2015's World Cup disappointment with a return to form, while the latter's state-of-the-art physiotherapy centre has gone from opening its doors to being in constant use by a crowd of appreciative users.

"Our diary is always full," explained the charity's Centre Manager Karen Smith. "The majority of our children are based in Surrey and Kent, but some travel from as far as Nottingham, and as soon as I release new dates we immediately become booked up."

A huge part of the Bromley-based facility's appeal is its Wooden Spoon Spider Therapy Room, which was officially opened by British Paralympic and six-time gold medal winner David Weir in 2015.

Equipped with two Universal Exercise Units (UEUs) to help children with

cerebral palsy and other mobility problems boost their strength, balance and coordination, the sought-after suite was made possible thanks to a £25,000 donation from the children's charity of rugby's Kent committee.

"The money we received from Wooden Spoon had a huge effect on us," continued Karen. "Our building was derelict when the charity first became involved and it contributed to the original set-up. The donation went a long way and allowed us to source the equipment and facilities we needed."

To date, more than 70 three to 16-year-olds have benefited from the Centre, with the Spider Therapy Room – which takes its name from the UEUs that use a series of elastic ropes to create a web to support children and allow them to exercise in any position – delivering more than just improved mobility.

"Our equipment and physiotherapists can have a big impact on a child's confidence," Karen added. "A lot of the children who visit us generally have problems with their balance and worry about falling and hurting themselves, but time at the

Centre helps them to have trust in what they are capable of and to reach their full potential."

One enduring beneficiary of Wooden Spoon Kent's support is Freddie Farmer, who inspired the Centre's creation. Born with cerebral palsy, Freddie has taken daily advantage of the vision of his grandfather – who was spurred into action by seeing his family previously having to complete 200-mile round trips for treatment. Now 15, Freddie is preparing to sit his GCSEs having been pushed physically and academically at the Centre.

And he is not alone in wanting to hang around. Keen to build on the solid start provided by Wooden Spoon, the Foundation has expanded its offering by purchasing an array of new equipment and creating on-site accommodation for travelling families. It is an extension which will benefit both those in need of physiotherapy and their loved ones for years to come.

"Physiotherapy can be tiring and to have a place for our children to relax, especially if they have travelled a long distance to be here, is a real bonus. The same is true for the parents who have to do the driving."



# NO SPLIT LOYALTIES FOR DUAL NATIONAL

Quins' former Wales U20s star nails his colours firmly to England's mast

**A** lot can happen in the four years between Rugby World Cups, but Alex Dombrandt must be alone in being able to claim to have represented two nations since Twickenham hosted 2015's final.

Following a brilliant debut season for Harlequins, the back row giant shone for an England XV against the Barbarians this summer and also featured in Eddie Jones' pre-tournament training squad.

It was with Wales though that the 22-year-old first sampled international rugby. Eligible to pull on a red jersey as a Cardiff-based student, he became an honorary Welshman for the U20s Six Nations in 2017.

However, being able to boast a multinational CV does not mean that the bruising ball carrier's allegiances will be split during the action in Japan...

## On featuring in Eddie Jones' plans

*After one season in the professional game, to earn a position in the Rugby World Cup training squad was a massive moment for me and my family. Being involved against the Barbarians was an indication of a good season but being called into the camp did come as a shock. It was a surprise but a real honour. I never thought that I'd be in that position. My first season went better than I expected and being involved with England topped it off. To train shoulder-to-shoulder with some of the players that a few years ago I was watching on TV and idolising was surreal.*

## On missing out on the final cut

*I did have that belief in myself that I could make the World Cup squad. If you don't believe in yourself and have that confidence, you are going to struggle. I worked hard but it just wasn't to be; it was a valuable experience and will stand me in good stead for the season with Harlequins and the future. I learnt a lot about myself and from the other players.*

## On England's World Cup prospects

*I spent five or six weeks with the squad. It was a really positive environment and everyone is working to the same goal of winning the World*

Star signing: England's Alex Dombrandt is supporting our Schools Campaign (page 22)



“”

**A country like England should be thinking about winning – every tournament you enter you want to go all the way and we've definitely got the players to do it**

*Cup. A country like England should be thinking about winning – every tournament you enter you want to go all the way and we've definitely got the players to do it. It is now about putting in the hard yards to be physically and mentally ready to win it.*

## On forgetting the form of four years ago

*There are a few players in the current squad that were involved in the last World Cup. That World Cup has been and gone though so it is important England put that behind them and look forward. This is a new tournament, a new host country and a new group of players who are working well together. As players you tend to look at your immediate environment and keep focused on yourself and the need to perform.*

## On which nation he will cheer on

*I played for Wales Under 20s, but I've got no*

*Welsh in me and it was only because I was at university there that I was able to play. I fully support England, although I do have a few friends in the Wales team from my uni days and when they are not playing England I like to see them do well. A number of nations stand a chance in Japan and on their day Wales can be a formidable team.*

## On England's competition

*I think it is going to be one of the most closely-contested World Cups there has been. South Africa are looking very strong so I wouldn't be surprised if they are up there. New Zealand will also be strong – their pack looks class. I think the back rows will have a big say in how things work out, with the ruck areas hotly-contested, and the likes of Ardie Savea [All Blacks] and Duane Vermeulen [South Africa] are players to keep an eye on.*



# A SOURCE OF JOY

A place to play continues to brighten the lives of Irish children



## WHO

Wooden Spoon Ulster

## WHERE

Northern Ireland Children's Hospice, Belfast

## WHAT

Sensory soft play room

## THEY SAID

*"I would like to thank [the] team for enabling us to have such a wonderful facility here at our hospice."*

**L**IKE Joe Schmidt, who brought beams to the faces of Ireland supporters by masterminding an opening World Cup win over Scotland as this issue went to press, Wooden Spoon is also in the business of bringing enjoyment to others.

A sensory soft play facility funded by the children's charity of rugby and opened in the wake of the last tournament, is providing a constant source of joy, engagement and entertainment to users of Belfast's Northern Ireland Children's Hospice.

Head of Children's Hospice Services Grace Stewart explained that the Wooden Spoon Soft Play Room, which is kitted out with brightly-coloured slides, foam shapes and sensory equipment, continues to be a popular port of call and has been used by more than 220 youngsters – as well as 400 family members – in the last year alone.

"A lot of the children who use the facility will have profound disabilities and may spend a lot of time in wheelchairs or systems that restrict their movement," she said.

"The Wooden Spoon Soft Play Room gives them a bit of freedom and a chance to interact with their peers

and, indeed, their siblings in a safe, protected way. Wooden Spoon helped us to introduce the sensory elements and it's really powerful to see the children experience cause and effect and to see smiles and hear laughter once they catch on that they are changing the colour of the room."

Adding that the room plays an important role in the Hospice's mission to enhance the lives of its users, including youngsters with life-limiting conditions and illnesses, she added: "Palliative care is about enhancing life and creating every opportunity we can for the children and their families.

"We can't change the journeys they are on, but what we can do is change their experience.

"Facilities like the Wooden Spoon Soft Play Room are hugely important in enabling us to do that."

Grace's comments echoed those of her colleague Heather Weir following the room's visit by the honorary president of Wooden Spoon Ulster, British and Irish Lions legend Willie John McBride, in 2016.

"We cannot convey enough our gratitude for the support we have received from Wooden Spoon," said the Hospice's CEO.

"On behalf of our staff, the children and families, I would like to thank [the] team for enabling us to have such a wonderful facility here at our hospice and enabling us to deliver an even greater level of specialist care to children and young people."

“”

**It's really powerful to see the children experience cause and effect and to see smiles and hear laughter once they catch on that they are changing the colour of the room**



# IRISH EYES HAVE PLENTY OF REASONS TO SMILE

Henderson hopeful of Ireland bettering previous World Cup benchmark

**D**ESPITE amassing a handsome haul of 29 international caps, Rob Henderson was never given the opportunity to help his country advance beyond the quarter-finals of a Rugby World Cup – a feat Ireland have achieved, but never bettered, in all bar two tournaments.

The combative centre was left out of Donal Lenihan's 1999 squad and was sidelined from 2003's tournament with injury, but the former British and Irish Lions star has high hopes of watching his nation reach the semi-finals for the first time as a supporter.

Speaking exclusively to *Spoonews*, the former Munster and Toulon player explained why Joe Schmidt's side have reason to be optimistic about progressing further than ever before...



The Hendersons: Rob and wife Angie at this year's Rugby Ball

“”

**Having got one monkey off the back by beating New Zealand twice in recent years and being considered one of the major nations, confidence should be high**

#### On the strength of Ireland's team

*Any group that doesn't have a certain Mr O'Driscoll in it is probably not the strongest squad ever selected by Ireland because he was outstanding, but as a collection of players – if everyone is fit and playing on form – they are the number one ranked team in the world and can beat anyone on their day.*

#### On why the squad won't rely on rank

*It doesn't matter if you are ranked number one or number 10 in the world – all that matters is the results you get in the tournament. That Ireland, having played in numerous World Cups, have never gone past the quarter-final stage is a tale in itself. However, with arguably the best half-back pairing in the world, with Murray and Sexton on-song, a fantastic pack and genuine back-up in each position, this tournament represents a real opportunity. Looking at the way in which the pools and first knock-out games are likely to pan out, it's not going to be an easy ride with either South Africa or New Zealand in the quarter-finals but I am thoroughly convinced that we will get out of our group.*

#### On early indicators of progress

*You've got South Africa v New Zealand one day and Ireland v Scotland the next and you can almost then pick the quarter-final line up from there. That's not being disingenuous or*

*disrespectful to the other teams in the groups [Pool A and B], but those are the four best ranked teams so the first knock-out games will be semi-mapped out after the first weekend.*

#### On the pressures of being number one

*The guys are fully professional and records are there to be either continued or broken. Having got one monkey off the back by beating New Zealand twice in recent years and being considered one of the major nations, confidence should be high. It may have taken a knock after the performance against England at Twickenham, but they followed it up with two victories against the Welsh, which was a definite confidence booster. Of course, at World Cups it is more a question of keeping your first team and your squad fit and with so many games in such a short space of time you obviously need a little bit of luck as well. Everyone knows what the expectations are and if everyone stays fit and performs to the best of their ability, then*

*Ireland have a genuine chance of progressing beyond the quarter finals and if that happens I will be heavily hopeful of them going on to win the World Cup.*

#### On the competition

*Obviously New Zealand will always be strong; England have got a brilliant squad; Wales have got a lot of pain and hurt having lost in the semi-finals of the tournament a couple of trophies back by a point and have got a strong collection of players together – even if they are struggling with a few major concerns around 10 and 15; but I think South Africa are the dark horse. It wouldn't surprise me to see a South Africa and Ireland final if they manage to miss each other in the quarter-finals. South Africa have a great squad and [Rassie] Erasmus has worked wonders having – I like to think – picked up a few traits while coaching at Munster. They are the team that stand out as having a genuine opportunity of lifting the trophy again.*



# RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Wooden Spoon-funded kitchen helps cafe to cater for those with additional needs



## WHO

Wooden Spoon Scotland

## WHERE

The Usual Place, Dumfries

## WHAT

A commercial kitchen

## THEY SAID

*"It is a joy and a privilege to see our young people flourish. None of this would have been possible without the support of Wooden Spoon Scotland."*

**A**LTHOUGH most Scotland fans will readily acknowledge that the likelihood of seeing their heroes lift the Webb Ellis trophy this November is remote, winning has become a habit for one Scottish team.

Staff and students at The Usual Place – an innovative community cafe in the town of Dumfries – have picked up no fewer than 11 awards since the eatery opened its doors for business a fortnight after the 2015 Rugby World Cup final.

The sustained success enjoyed by the popular cafe, which provides citizenship and employment opportunities to young people with additional needs, would not have been possible without Wooden Spoon Scotland's help in firing up its stoves, according to its co-founder Heather Hall.

Reflecting on the all-important ingredient provided to the project by the children's charity of rugby, The Usual Place's chief executive officer said: "The funding given to us by Wooden Spoon Scotland enabled us to have a commercial kitchen that would not have been possible otherwise.

"It was really important to have such a facility because when our young people leave us and move on to work in a hospitality-related environment they will meet the same equipment, utensils and resources they have learned to use in The Usual Place.

"Things might be in a different place but they will have the confidence to use them and be able to comply to the requirements common of a commercial provider."

Explaining how 14 to 26-year-olds engaging with the project operate the cafe, serve customers, prepare food and work towards Scottish Vocational Qualifications and other industry-recognised accreditations, Heather added: "Over the past four years our young people have successfully moved into lots of different business environments and that would not have been the case without the Wooden Spoon Kitchen – it has been essential to that delivery."

Aside from helping to bridge the gap between young people with additional needs and members of the public, and enhancing its graduates chances of future employment, The

Usual Place is serving up skills which will have a long-term impact on the daily lives of those it supports.

"One of the great by-products of the Wooden Spoon Kitchen is it gives our young people the knowledge and understanding to live independently," Heather continued.

"If they can make a pot of soup or meal in our kitchen, then they can make it in their own home. They get the know-how and skills to feed themselves, and feed themselves well."

Such is the quality of food produced by The Usual Place's workforce, it is not only increasing the venue's popularity and profitability. In addition to culinary commendations, the cafe is being held up as a model of best practice and blueprint for future projects.

"We have received lots of visits from other organisations and agencies," Heather concluded.

"Our young people have been working with researchers at Glasgow University to see what it is that works so well at The Usual Place and why it works so that the model can be transferred to other sectors."



# HASTINGS PREDICTS BATTLE FOR SCOTS

Former skipper believes auld adversaries will spoil Scotland's World Cup party

**S**OUTH Africa and New Zealand both featured in the closing act of the international career of Scottish great Gavin Hastings.

It was in Pretoria that the fast-footed fullback played his last game for Scotland, captaining his nation against the All Blacks in the quarter-finals of the 1995 Rugby World Cup.

The skipper scored a conversion and penalty in the high-stakes encounter, taking his tally of international points to 667, but his team's dream of lifting the Webb Ellis trophy were dashed by a Jonah Lomu-inspired opposition that went on to break England hearts in the semi-finals of that tournament.

Fast forward almost a quarter of a century and Gavin believes South Africa and New Zealand again look likely of spoiling Scottish celebrations. Talking exclusively to *Spoonews*, the Lions legend laid out why...

## On Scotland's pre-tournament preparations

*They had a difficult away match against France but won the three games that followed and I think that's fine; I would guess that was absolutely according to plan. I've been amazed at how many games each of the home nations have played leading into the World Cup. There must be some logic behind it but four games seems like one too many to me. Most of the teams – apart from Wales – survived without any major injury worries though so I guess ultimately they can say they are prepared and ready for the challenges that await.*

## On the relevance of rankings

*I don't understand the rankings and am not quite sure how they [World Rugby] decide them. You will not find many people in the Northern Hemisphere who pay much attention to them and they are absolutely irrelevant in terms of the World Cup and how teams are going to get on.*

## On the importance of a good start

*From a Scotland perspective, things will be much easier for them in terms of qualification out of the group if they win against Ireland. Let's not forget that Japan last time out, in*



**If they can reproduce that second-half performance from Twickenham then who knows what might be achievable**

*2015, won three pool matches and became the first team in Rugby World Cup history not to progress after doing so. You have to say it would be tough on Scotland if they were to suffer the same fate and we don't want that to happen. The start for both teams [Scotland and Ireland] is absolutely crucial because whoever wins that match can move forward to the rest of the tournament with a lot of confidence. If you don't win, then it is going to become a big struggle to get out of the pool.*

## On a competitive field

*I wouldn't say the tournament is wide open but I think there are more teams that are capable of winning than before and that on their day there*

*are more teams capable of beating another top-ranked team. I think there will be a couple of major upsets on the scale of Japan - South Africa four years ago. I genuinely believe this is the year upsets can happen, with one maybe coming in the pool stages and another in the quarter- or semi-finals.*

## On his tip for the trophy

*I think South Africa are looking incredibly strong and they have always performed really well at World Cups. Looking at the stats, South Africa are the only team that come close to New Zealand's win-loss record at the tournament – and they have played less games having played in two fewer World Cups. They will be feeling like they have an excellent chance. People are questioning whether New Zealand look as well-rounded as they have been in the past and I think they look fallible. Everyone always talks up their chances but I think it would be good for the tournament if a team does not win it for a third time in a row and there are certainly other teams capable of knocking New Zealand off their perch. I'm backing South Africa to hold the Webb Ellis trophy aloft.*

## On Scotland's potential fate

*Anything other than getting out of the pool stage will be considered a major disappointment for Scotland. I would like to think that we can be very competitive in all our pool matches and – assuming we do qualify for the knock-out stages – it seems likely we will face either South Africa or New Zealand. If I'm backing South Africa to win the tournament then it means we are not going to beat them, but if Scotland do get to the quarter-finals they've got absolutely nothing to lose and may as well throw caution to the wind. And if they can somehow reproduce that second-half performance from Twickenham then who knows what might be achievable. They have shown what they can do and are capable of scoring amazing and rapid-fire tries – not conceding them is the challenge. When Scotland are playing at their exciting best they are a handful for a lot of teams and that's the way I'd like to see them play in the World Cup.*



# DECODING DYSLEXIA

Historic help ensures longevity of Tomorrow's Generation Learning Centre



## WHO

Wooden Spoon Wales

## WHERE

Tomorrow's Generation Learning Centre

## WHAT

Classroom refurbishment

## HOW MUCH?

£4,745

## THEY SAID

*"We feel that our work is life changing and that is the feedback we get."*

**W**HILE 2015 proved to be a familiar affair for the All Blacks as they became the first team in history to win back-to-back World Cups, the year kicked-off a bright new era for a specialist dyslexia centre thanks to the support of the children's charity of rugby.

A four-figure donation from Wooden Spoon Wales enabled the Tomorrow's Generation Learning Centre to set up home at Lisvane in the north of Cardiff and begin to deliver services aimed at helping young people cope with the learning difficulty.

The £4,745 grant was used to completely refurbish an under-used and unloved school outbuilding into a warm and welcoming environment for 7 to 11-year-olds in need of additional assistance outside of mainstream schooling.

Helen Grimes, a specialist teacher and assessor at the centre, said the impact of the transformation was still being felt four years on.

"We have people coming to us from all over South Wales and their reaction when they walk through the door is always 'wow, it's lovely in here'," she said.

"With the help of Wooden Spoon

we were not only able to create a habitable environment but one that feels friendly and homely. That is an important factor – children walk through the door and immediately feel comfortable."

Initially open two days each week, the centre is now operational Monday to Friday and, just like the makeover made possible by Wooden Spoon Wales, is a catalyst for positive change.

Welcoming up to eight children with dyslexia on a daily basis, specialist teachers tackle the young student's individual literacy targets and address any challenges thrown at them by the national curriculum.

Importantly, visiting youngsters are also given general learning skills and the confidence to hold their heads high on their return to mainstream classrooms and education.

"We teach them how to manage their dyslexia and flourish," added Helen. "We feel that our work is life changing and that is the feedback we get; we've had some really lovely messages from parents saying we have changed their child's life."

"That sounds dramatic, but by intervening early at a vulnerable age in terms of self-esteem and self-

image, we can give those with dyslexia the confidence and skills to tackle high school and to achieve what they want to achieve."

In addition to unlocking the door to academic attainment, Helen said the centre had a role to play in safeguarding their students beyond their school years.

"Some children with dyslexia do not externalise their frustration [at finding some aspects of learning difficult] and direct their frustration inwards, which could be potentially damaging in respect of their long-term wellbeing and mental health. We are addressing that and providing a level of support mainstream, public-funded schools find difficult because of financial constraints."

It is for this reason that Wooden Spoon Wales' contribution to the Tomorrow's Generation Learning Centre four years ago will continue to benefit lives in the future.

"We are really grateful for the support we have had from Wooden Spoon – it was instrumental in getting us up and running and has allowed us to help all those children who have come through our door since," concluded Helen. "Thank you."



# STILL IN WITH A SHOUT

Captain-turned-performance director Ryan Jones warns against writing off Wales

**W**HILE odds on Wales lifting the Webb Ellis trophy lengthened dramatically following a torrid tournament warm-up that included three defeats and saw them toppled from the top of the world rankings by Ireland, Ryan Jones remains resolute about the Red's World Cup prospects.

The former national skipper and triple Grand Slam winner is better placed than most to evaluate the mood in the Welsh camp having taken over the role of WRU performance director earlier this year, and is content his countrymen are capable of being genuine contenders in Japan.

In an exclusive interview with *Spoonews* on the eve of the tournament, Ryan pointed to the calibre of Wales coach Warren Gatland – the man who appointed him as captain in 2008 – and the qualities of ex-Lions colleague Alun Wyn Jones, who succeeded him as skipper, as reasons to be confident...

## On there being no need to hit the panic button

*In any World Cup cycle you prepare and plan, and Warren and his team have been doing that for several years now. From identifying the talent through to ensuring there is strength and depth, conditioning the squad and the way the boys are playing, it has been a planned process and been very well executed. We had fantastic success in the Six Nations and have tried lots of new things physically and technically.*

## On topping the world rankings

*I think it's testament to the job that Warren and his team have done. It is recognition of all the work that has gone on within Welsh rugby and the journey Wales has been on for the last decade. Ten years ago we could only dream of being the best or being talked about in the same sentence as the best. When it comes to any given game in any given campaign, however, rankings count for nothing. Whether you are*

*discussing seedings in other sports or favourites in horse racing, all bets are off once the whistle or gun goes. The World Cup matches will be 15 fellas against 15 fellas – that's all.*

## On the pressures of an expectant nation

*I think the best players and the best teams in the world thrive under pressure. Being considered a favourite is just a moment in time – you are only as good as your last game or your next one. How you get to a tournament is largely irrelevant. The guys will be judged on the seven games they've got to win a Rugby World Cup – nobody is going to be talking about what the world ranking was going into it and no one is going to be talking about it afterwards, all the talk will be about the team that wins. All eyes are focused on doing that and I genuinely believe we go to this World Cup as a serious contender. I know better than most what the expectation is from fans and what the expectations are of those pulling on the red jersey. We've got a wonderful opportunity – this is one of the best squads Wales has produced for a World Cup and we have as good a chance as anyone. In Warren we have a coach who knows how to manage fixtures, pick a group and galvanise a team and then we've got guys like Alun – a star of the Lions who has played in big, big test matches under immense amounts of pressure. The quality of people like that in the squad goes a long way.*

## On a potential quarter-final clash with England

*Tournaments evolve so naturally we have people looking at the potential games ahead. We know an awful lot about England and an awful lot about their players.*

*We are keeping an eye on them – how they are playing, the threats they pose – and several others, but a World Cup is essentially about seven one-off games. You can't afford a hangover, win or lose, you have to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and go on to the next challenge.*

## On who will shine for Wales

*Everyone has got a role to play and no individual has more value. I think we'll see different people star in different games and there is always someone who comes out of a tournament really positively – that's the romance of major competitions. I desperately want them all to come back as heroes and return with the Webb Ellis trophy. On top of that, I'd love to see players cement themselves in the archive of World Cup greats or be part of great World Cup moments. As a retired sportsman, it's those sort of things you reflect on.*

## On his tip for the trophy

*I genuinely believe that it is going to be a really open World Cup. A lot of the big teams have beaten each other. New Zealand have plenty of World Cup-winning experience but you have to wonder if they are as strong as they have been; South Africa seem to have their game back on track and their physicality is going to cause some people some problems. Australia are suddenly looking really competitive and have shown what they can do in one-off games; England can also produce great performances on their day and Ireland are obviously also strong. Including Wales, you have six teams that you would think will be there or thereabouts for the quarter-finals and have a good chance of winning it. Who progresses the furthest may come down to injuries and how they manage the group stage. I think Wales will definitely get to the knock-out stages but after that your guess is as good as mine.*

“““

**We've got a wonderful opportunity – this is one of the best squads Wales has produced for a World Cup**





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# BRING ON THE ACTION!

**F**OLLOWING the success of our recent [#MyGameFace](#) social media campaign, we've lined up a series of digital deeds to keep you busy between World Cup matches this autumn.

Kicking off this exciting series of events will be the inaugural Egg and Wooden Spoon Race. From 7 October, schools, businesses and rugby clubs will be invited to crown their own champions and we want you to share your cracking race highlights and stylish spoon designs with us.

Whether a victory video or snapshot of the scramble to the finish line, keep us informed of your stirring support by using [#EggAndWoodenSpoon](#) on Twitter and Instagram ([@charityspoon](#)) or via Facebook ([Wooden Spoon Charity](#)).

Our second World Cup fixture will be a chance to put your rugby club in the spotlight while testing the ground-hopping expertise of

fellow Wooden Spoon supporters.

On 21 October we want you to take a photo of a rugby ball within a ground near you and email the picture to [ahemming@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:ahemming@woodenspoon.org.uk) for us to share across our social media channels. How many clubs will you be able to correctly identify?

World Cup final day will mark the launch of our [#TackleDisadvantage](#) campaign. With the aim of raising awareness of children and young people facing disadvantage across the UK and Ireland, we will be asking for your nominations for rugby teams deserving of a training session with a star.

We'll then consider your choices and select two lucky clubs to be coached by a high-profile player.

Throughout the tournament our regions will also be running a series of fundraising events to keep you entertained...

## 12 OCTOBER

**WHAT:** Wooden Spoon Essex World Cup Breakfast

**WHERE:** Brentwood Brewing Co

**FIND OUT MORE:** [essex@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:essex@woodenspoon.org.uk)

**WHAT:** Wooden Spoon Worcestershire World Cup Breakfast

**WHERE:** Worcester Rugby Football Club

**FIND OUT MORE:** [worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 1 NOVEMBER

**WHAT:** Wooden Spoon Chilterns & GFLC World Cup Lunch

**WHERE:** Phyllis Court Club

**FIND OUT MORE:** [chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk)

**WHAT:** Wooden Spoon Merseyside World Cup Q&A

**WHERE:** Birkenhead Park Rugby Club

**FIND OUT MORE:** [merseyside@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:merseyside@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 2 NOVEMBER

**WHAT:** Wooden Spoon Ulster World Cup Final Breakfast

**WHERE:** Europa Hotel, Belfast

**FIND OUT MORE:** [ulster@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:ulster@woodenspoon.org.uk)

► Keep up to date with Wooden Spoon's news and events during the World Cup by visiting [woodenspoon.org.uk/rugby-in-japan](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/rugby-in-japan)



# HADDINGTON WIN NUMBERS GAME

Partner club marches into the record books with an army of players

**W**OODEN Spoon partner club Haddington RFC can boast to be home to hundreds of history makers after being confirmed as Guinness World Record holders for the most participants in a touch rugby match.

The East Lothian-based side were awarded the accolade for hosting an energy-sapping, continuous six-hour fixture – featuring 467 players – on their Neilson Park pitch last summer.

Arranged as part of the 700-year anniversary of Haddington's Royal Charter, the record-breaking encounter saw the rugby club's players and members joined by former Scotland internationals Stuart McInally, Willem Nel and Sarah Law.

Finlay Calder, who starred for Scotland and the Lions and grew up in the town, also pulled on his boots for the marathon match, which was contested by Haddington President's XV and Haddington Barbarians XV.

Stringent rules required all of the men, women and children who took part in the attempt to play a minimum of 10 minutes.

Keith Wallace, Haddington RFC's president, said keeping track of substitutions in order to provide the evidence necessary to have the record ratified represented a significant challenge.

"It wasn't as easy as just having rolling subs and logistically it was very difficult as you had to track every player," he told *Spoonews*.

"Things were made all the harder by the weather, with the day of the match by far the worst of a great summer."

Although torrential rain made conditions difficult underfoot, Keith insisted it did little to dampen Haddington spirits.

"The record attempt meant a lot to the club and despite the filthy weather there were smiles on everyone's faces," added the club president, who took part in the early stages of the game alongside two of his nieces.

"It really was a fantastic day and it brought the rugby community and families together – it was brilliant to see grandparents playing alongside their grandchildren and players aged from five to 73 getting involved. One extended family managed to field 18 players!"

Having exceeded the previous world record of 442 players by 25, Keith concluded that the Wooden Spoon partner club had no imminent plans to add to the tally.

"We're delighted to have generated 467 new Guinness World Record holders but we have no intention of trying it again, unless, of course, someone beats it! If that happens then I think it is only right that we would consider getting our record back."

➤ To find out more about Wooden Spoon's Partnership Club Programme and how to get your team involved, visit [woodenspoon.org.uk/rugbyclubs](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/rugbyclubs)



# EXTRA TIME

Charities combine to contest marathon match

**T**WO sporting heavyweights went head-to-head in a marathon game that will go down in the record books as the longest full-contact match of rugby union ever contested.

Wooden Spoon and School of Hard Knocks (SOHK) – a charity changing the lives of young people and adults through rugby programmes – played out a phenomenal 30.5-hour fixture which featured 545 tries, 290 conversions and four drop goals.

Played at the training ground of newly-promoted Premiership side London Irish in Sunbury-on-Thames, the epic encounter was contested by two 23-strong squads during a sweltering August Bank Holiday weekend which saw temperatures top 32 degrees.

With both teams permitted to make rolling substitutions throughout, the action saw most players take to the pitch for four hour stints and eventually ended in a 2,154-1,163 SOHK victory.

Reflecting on his involvement in the gruelling game, which is on target to raise £100,000 in support of children facing disadvantage in the UK and Ireland, former Northampton Saints and Bedford Blues star Matt Allen said: “It was an amazing and horrendous experience! I’ve never experienced such physical and mental fatigue before but the camaraderie between both teams, and the support of the volunteers and organisers, helped us get through it.

“It was an honour to play in the game and



**Long haul:** There were no shortage of smiles (above) and sores (left) during the record-breaking showdown between Wooden Spoon and School of Hard Knocks

helped us all get through the 30.5 hours.

“I look back now with my aches and blisters and smile at what was such an awesome, enjoyable experience.”

The Chelmsford RFC player continued: “What makes it sweeter is the money raised for two great charities and having been able to help them change the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves and give back to the community by doing something we love.”

The skipper’s satisfaction was shared by Russ Keegan, who added: “I was not prepared for how hard this would be and it quickly became the hardest thing I have ever attempted in my life. The challenge was amazing and we could not have come even close to completing it without the amazing support crew – especially given the scorching weather.

“The great work Wooden Spoon does makes all the pain worthwhile. If a moment of my pain can help shape a child’s life then it was all worth it.”

The previous record for longest match was set by The Fire Fighters Charity and Scotty’s Little Soldiers in May 2018. Held at the Sixways Stadium, home of Worcester Warriors, the game ran to 29 hours and 15 minutes and finished 1,609-1,314 in the firefighters’ favour.

help raise money for Wooden Spoon and School of Hard Knocks.

“They are fantastic charities that use rugby as a means to provide so many opportunities to people that maybe haven’t had the same ones that I have.”

Echoing the thoughts of his teammate, Wooden Spoon’s captain Stafford Butt added: “Being a rather rotund front row player not known for my endurance, I knew this would be a real test; the event did not disappoint and was a lot tougher than I thought.

“My teammates and the opposition provided the well-known rugby camaraderie which

Wooden Spoon National Rugby Manager Matt Mitchell, who managed the team and stepped into play as a last-minute injury replacement, praised the events’ many volunteers.

“We can’t thank this amazing group of supporters enough – they worked tirelessly shuttling energy drinks, water and sun cream to the record breakers,” he said. “We also had a brilliant team of medics and physios who were responsible for

administering running repairs and patching up players.”

Sarah Webb, CEO of Wooden Spoon, highlighted the part played by the charity’s partners in ensuring the event was a success. She said: “Our squad was well-backed and we are incredibly grateful to OPRO for supplying mouthguards, O’Neills for providing us with a strip and Irwin Mitchell for sponsoring the shirts.”

Nick Rucker, a partner at Irwin

Mitchell, concluded: “We’re delighted to have been able to sponsor the shirts for this world record attempt. Our ongoing partnership with Wooden Spoon means we can contribute towards excellent events such as this that raise vital funds for children with disabilities and facing disadvantage.”

➤ To find out more about future fundraisers, visit [woodenspoon.org.uk/events](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/events)



## BOOTROOM BOOST





● VOLUNTEERS from Wooden Spoon Devon ensured a huge moment in their county's history doubled as an opportunity to raise a big sum for the children's charity of rugby.

Joined by mascot Spoony, members from the West Country committee collected donations from the bumper crowd which gathered in the centre of South Molton to witness the world's largest rugby ball.

Created by Aramis Rugby and produced to official specifications, the behemoth ball measured 5.98 metres in length and 3.70 metres in diameter.

Guinness World Record representatives were on hand to confirm the ball's "biggest" boast following its arrival by helicopter. Displayed on a super-sized kicking tee, the record-breaker dwarfed its 4.7-metre predecessor.

## HIGH ACHIEVERS EXCEL ON EVEREST

**T**HANKFULLY for all those taking part in the LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge, it was world records rather than Wooden Spoon volunteers that tumbled during the charity's expedition to Earth's tallest mountain.

In addition to generating more than £250,000 for the children's

charity of rugby, the high-altitude adventure significantly raised the bar for sporting endeavours by securing two entries in the history books.

The first record set was for the highest game of touch rugby on 25 April. Contested by teams captained by Tamara Taylor and Ollie Phillips, and Lee Mears and

Shane Williams, the match was played at Everest Base Camp – a breathtaking 5,119 metres above sea level. Officiated by Wooden Spoon National Rugby Manager Matt Mitchell, the sub-zero fixture saw both teams score three tries.

A unique double was completed five days later when the challengers climbed to 6,331

metres to contest the highest game of Rugby Union. The snowy spectacle saw Wales great Shane and England legend Ollie again lock horns – this time in a 5-5 thriller, which featured the talents of four Sherpas and was played on the East Rongbuk Glacier, close to Mount Everest's Advanced Base Camp.





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# WINTER BREAK? THINK AGAIN

We don't want you standing on the sidelines of our life-changing work over the coming months, so we've come up with some suggestions to keep you in the fundraising mix...

# 1

## SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

HARLEQUINS and emerging England ace Alex Dombrandt (pictured, page 9) has thrown his considerable weight behind our schools campaign and has this message for school students and staff: "Get behind the Wooden Spoon schools campaign and help us fund life-changing projects for local children with disabilities or facing disadvantage.

"Your support can make a world of difference to children living in

difficult circumstances and can give them opportunities to play sport, have better career prospects and build their social skills.

"The highest fundraising school will win a training session with me. And hopefully I can show you some of the skills I have picked up playing for the England rugby team."

One easy way to get involved and to stand a chance of having Alex come to call is to wear a pair of Wooden Spoon's distinctive socks for a sporting fixture.

All you have to do is contact us to let us know the date of your match so that we can send you an explanatory letter and order form. Two weeks before your match we'll send out your



socks (payment required on delivery) and then you just need to take photos of your team sporting their Wooden Spoon stripes.

If pulling on socks isn't your thing, you can still take part by choosing an alternative activity.

Your class may opt to walk, run or cycle 1,000 metres or perhaps wear your favourite team's colours to school for the day in exchange for a small donation.

Just set a date for your event and let us know and we will be happy to provide supporting fundraising materials and collection buckets.

To start collecting donations, we recommend setting up an online fundraising page using a tool like Virgin Money Giving.

➤ To get involved, simply email [charity@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:charity@woodenspoon.org.uk)

# 2

## CONSIDER US IN YOUR WILL

This year Wooden Spoon asks you to remember the children who need our help the most, those who share the same dreams as everyone else but do not yet have access to the same opportunities.

After providing for your loved ones, we ask that you consider leaving a gift in your will to Wooden Spoon to help change the lives of children with a disability or facing disadvantage across the UK and Ireland.

With your blessing and support, we can make a lasting impact in your local community.

Find out more about how you can pass on your legacy to the next generation through the children's charity of rugby at [woodenspoon.org.uk/leave-a-legacy](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/leave-a-legacy)

# 3



## COME TO US FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS CARDS

With only three months until the festivities begin, it's time to start thinking about Christmas! This year, Wooden Spoon have a beautiful selection of cards for you to purchase via our online shop. There are five different designs to choose from and are priced at just £5 for a pack of 10. Don't delay, go to our online shop to pick out your favourite: [bit.ly/WS-Christmas](http://bit.ly/WS-Christmas)

# 4

## CLIMB YOUR OWN EVEREST

Follow in our LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge footsteps by tackling a momentous feat.

Climb Your Own Everest is the perfect fundraiser for your school, work or rugby club. We challenge

you to walk, run, climb or cycle the equivalent distance to the height of Mount Everest – 8,848 metres. To get involved, simply:

- Select a date for the challenge
- Email Lucy Roy, [lroy@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:lroy@woodenspoon.org.uk), and let her

know when and how you are planning to complete the 8,848m.

- We will send you a Climb Your Own Everest pack to help with your fundraising.

- Set up a fundraising page and start getting sponsored!





# UNITED IN YOUR SUPPORT

Whether by taking on a personal challenge or by teaming up with club mates, school friends or work colleagues for an event, there are plenty of ways you can support the children's charity of rugby. We salute some of our fantastic fundraisers below...

**A**s a former triathlete, James Caviel has never shied away from a physical challenge, but his successful completion of the Deloitte Ride Across Britain cycle race in aid of Wooden Spoon Essex is all the more amazing given he was left temporarily paralysed 14 years ago.

The remarkable rider, whose 980-mile journey from Land's End to John O'Groats has already raised more than £2,500 for the children's charity of rugby, once feared he would never walk again after suffering a stroke during his 30s following a serious cycle crash and being knocked unconscious while playing rugby.

Now 50, James said: "After my

hospital admission I was told at least twice they thought I may have damaged my spinal cord in the bike accident or rugby tackle and if I had, it may mean I would be permanently paralysed.

"Eventually a very experienced neurosurgeon confirmed I had in fact had a stroke, caused by a blood clot which had, in all probability, been created by one of the incidents and a restricted blood vessel on my brain stem – a childhood birth defect.

"When the prognosis came through that I would recover and be able to walk again in time, it gave me the added impetus to work hard with my physio, stay strong mentally and stay positive. I



threw myself at the task ahead."

Against the odds and just a year-and-a-half after his stroke, James was back playing rugby and explained that his love for the sport was one of the reasons

why he chose Wooden Spoon as a beneficiary of his marathon ride.

"I've played rugby since I was seven; it's given me immense pleasure, great friendships and some excellent memories over the years but injury forced my retirement last season," he added. "Raising money for a children's charity with rugby roots was giving back to the same game and family that gave such wonderful pleasure. "It gave the ride some worthwhile purpose, which helped me stay focused."

It's not too late to show your support of James' epic trip from the toe to top of the UK. You can provide a donation via

[uk.virginmoneygiving.com/CAVIEL](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/CAVIEL)



● **PLAYERS** from Malton & Norton RUFC's women's squad showed a willingness to get their hands dirty in the name of Wooden Spoon.

Members of the team tackled a Tough Mudder course to raise money for the children's charity of rugby and endured trench crawls, cargo nets and electric shocks for the cause.

Despite being fit from their on-pitch endeavours, Ann Taylor – who helped to raise £1,200 – said: "I didn't train as much as I should have! I'm not a great lover of heights so the 25-foot high cargo net wasn't much fun and nor were the nine miles of hills. We kept each other going and encouraged each other over parts we didn't feel confident on. A few of the obstacles would have been impossible for me to get up without my teammates."

● **TWO** intrepid adventurers from Wooden Spoon partner Securitas are preparing to kayak across the Irish Sea in a bid to raise a boat-load of cash.

Andrew Hill and Vincent Haywood are hoping their 22-mile expedition with paddles will pull in around £35,000 in fundraising for the children's charity of rugby. The daring duo have provisionally planned their crossing for 30 September, but their departure will be at the mercy of the weather.

Explaining how the pair have prepared thoroughly for their fundraising voyage, Andrew said: "We are out training with heavy paddles weekly, increasing the distance as we go. We

aim to up this to 20 miles per paddle a week or two before we go – train hard, fight easy as the old maxim goes. Physically it will be tough but not insurmountable. The navigation and tides will be the difficult part as will the challenging tidal overflows and currents as we get closer to Copeland Island near Donaghadee."

This year has already seen Securitas show its support for Wooden Spoon. Opting for dry land rather than testing their sea legs, the company held a charity five-a-side football tournament and netted £484.84.

Event organiser Hasib Aseer said: "Wooden Spoon works closely with children who are

disabled and I have family members with disabilities – there is nothing better than putting a smile on people's faces."

To show your support of Securitas' paddlers, visit [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/AndrewHill64](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/AndrewHill64)

● **As described on the page opposite, Wooden Spoon welcomes the support of schools and the charity is incredibly grateful to Gravesend Grammar and Newcastle High School for Girls for their recent fundraising endeavours. The former collected £844 by holding a non-uniform day while the latter raised £387.43 from donations given during a sports award evening.**

# VIVE LA RÉVOLUTION

Rugbytots' reluctant rider **Max Webb** explains why the pain of pedalling from London to Paris is not enough to puncture his enthusiasm for Wooden Spoon

**H**E may have banished his bike to the shed and vowed to shun cycling for the immediate future, but Max Webb knows only too well that his two-wheeled tormentor will not get to gather too much dust.

History – and the Rugbytots founder's penchant for philanthropy – suggest his protestations over pedalling will quickly pass.

Indeed, since pledging his company's support to Wooden Spoon in 2014, Max has spent longer in Lycra than most and, alongside a 42-strong team of colleagues, completed a three-day, 178-mile ride from London to Paris this summer.

The cross-Channel adventure, the latest in a series of four cycling challenges undertaken on behalf of the children's charity of rugby, helped to swell Rugbytots fundraising total for the year beyond the £210,000 mark.

"I hate bikes," insisted the entrepreneur when *Spoonews* quizzed him about his serial stints on a saddle.

"Rugbytots has done a charity ride every other year since we started 12 years ago but that is

“”

**There was no way the original group of franchisees, coaches and myself could have run a marathon**

certainly not because of a love of cycling.

"It is more borne out of the fact that ex-rugby players are generally in no fit state to run, hike or do anything else! Cycling is probably the best form of exercise for old joints so that's how the rides really began – there was no way the original group of franchisees, coaches and myself could have run a marathon."

And although Max's legs have been conditioned by previous rides from Cardiff's Millennium Stadium to Twickenham and a gruelling 323-mile route from Land's End

to Twickenham in 2017, the Rugbytots CEO confessed to finding this year's French foray particularly tough.

"The second day of the ride coincided with a heatwave in France and the temperature soared to 40 degrees," he said. "London to Paris is not an easy ride, however, what should have been a challenging but achievable ride for those relatively new to cycling quickly became an extreme challenge."

"The heat was unbelievable and at one point I think it took us something like two hours to cover nine miles. It was horrendous; the tarmac was melting under our wheels and your water became too hot to drink within minutes."

Despite the punishing conditions, Max added that there was no talk of the team pulling up before Paris.

"It made the ride tough but in a way, a sick sort of way, while I was on my bike going through the pain I was also really loving it," he continued. "It's such a cliché and sounds so cheesy but it is those types of experiences that bring people together."





The work of Wooden Spoon and the support it affords children with a disability or facing disadvantage also proved a major source of motivation as the mercury rose.

"Absolutely, we thought about those we were riding for," Max told *Spoonews*. "The riders will have also been thinking about those who have sponsored them and their own families, who are incredibly proud of what they are achieving – you don't want to let people down.

"All of those drivers keep you going and you hold in the back of your mind why you are doing it. It's not a jolly, we're not away with the lads for a golfing trip – we are raising money for a great charity and it's not supposed to be easy."

Max's own passion for rugby made selecting Wooden Spoon as Rugbytots' charitable partner an obvious choice, but the successful businessman attributes the enduring relationship to shared values.

"The way in which Wooden Spoon allows money to be invested back into the local community and shows where money is going to be spent is fantastic," he explained.

"For example, we've got guys up in Newcastle who raised in the region of £7,000 from the last bike ride and we recently helped install a specialist cot at a hospice within their area. There are not many charities that give you the ability to have a say in how money raised is spent.

"There are children out there who really need our support and if we can do that through our own network of children, and be able to say to our Rugbytots that they are helping less able children, then the charity is a really nice fit for us."

It is because of such synergy that Max knows his sabbatical from the saddle will be relatively short-lived.

While there are no firm plans yet in place for a fifth Wooden Spoon fundraiser, the Rugbytots boss is resigned to the fact that his bike will be rolled out of retirement in due course.

"There's no way we'll get away with not doing



“”

**You hold in the back of your mind why you are doing it. It's not a jolly, we're not away with the lads for a golfing trip – we are raising money for a great charity and it's not supposed to be easy**

another fundraising ride because everyone has come to expect it," he concluded. "I might not be passionate about cycling but I love that Rugbytots is helping others – it's addictive – and I feel incredibly proud of everyone involved with the rides. From the fundraisers to my staff at head office, who work tirelessly behind the scenes for months before and after an event, it's a huge effort.

"Ultimately, that's what drives me to keep going. Every time we get to the end of a fundraising event, have hit our target and know

where the money is going to be spent, I start to think about how much more we can raise next time."

Given Max's appetite for advancement, it is little surprise that Rugbytots has become the international success story it has, with its sessions now running in more than 24 countries on five continents.

Originally set-up as a means to expose his three sons – then toddlers – to rugby, the play programme has since introduced tens of thousands of tots to the fun, team ethos and skills synonymous with the sport.

Its partnership with Wooden Spoon is also having a hugely positive impact on those who may never have the opportunity to participate in such physical activities, according to the charity's CEO Sarah Webb.

Citing specialist playgrounds, adventure trails and woodland walks as examples of the projects delivered thanks to money raised by Rugbytots, she said: "We are overwhelmed by the literal lengths Rugbytots has gone for Wooden Spoon during five years of generous support.

"Rugbytots has made a lasting impact on so many, helping us to positively transform the lives of children and young people with a disability or facing disadvantage across the UK and Ireland."







**Wooden Spoon**  
The children's charity of rugby

# SCRUM DINE WITH ME

..... **Tuesday 24th March 2020** .....

Rugby legends and culinary masters come together and battle it out in a cooking competition to be crowned Wooden Spoon champion, with guests on the night deciding who is their top chef!

.....  
**Reserve your place today**

Call the events team on **01252 773720** or email Sandy at [events@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:events@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
**[woodenspoon.org.uk/scrum-dine-with-me](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/scrum-dine-with-me)**



**PREMIERSHIP  
RUGBY**

Wooden Spoon is a registered charity in England and Wales  
(Reg No: 326691) and in Scotland (Reg No: SC039247)



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**



I would like to help by becoming a social member of Wooden Spoon. Please complete all **5 sections** below.

**Stirred into action at/by (please specify):**

## 1. MEMBERSHIP DONATION

Annual donation of £ (minimum £50) **OR**

Monthly donation of £ (minimum £5)

**Gift option (please tick one box):**

☐ Wooden Spoon tie/bow tie ☐ No gift

☐ Wooden Spoon pin

## 2. YOUR DETAILS

Title	First name
Surname	
Home address	
Postcode	

Email
Contact no
Date of birth D D / M M / Y Y Y Y
Are you a member of a Rugby Club (please specify)

## 3. PAYMENT

**Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit**



Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:

**Wooden Spoon, Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 2UZ**

**Name and full postal address of your bank or building society**

To: The Manager	Bank/building society
Address	
Postcode	

Service user number

9	4	2	8	0	8
---	---	---	---	---	---

Reference (Wooden Spoon use)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Name(s) of account holder(s)

--

Bank/building society account number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Branch sort code

--	--	--	--	--	--

**Instruction to your bank or building society:** Please pay Wooden Spoon Society Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Wooden Spoon Society and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature

--

Date

--

## 4. GIFT AID Boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate

*giftaid it*

Yes I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Wooden Spoon. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. ☐

## 5. DATA PROTECTION

Data Protection regulation has changed – to keep informed about our work and how you can support us you will need to opt in to each type of communication. Let us know how you would like to stay in touch:

(Tick all options that apply) ☐ Email ☐ Post ☐ Phone ☐ Text

**Please confirm that you would like to receive our occasional appeals and campaigns** ☐

**Tick here to find out about volunteering opportunities in your local area** ☐

Wooden Spoon values your support and promises to respect your privacy. Under the terms of GDPR 2018 we will store and process your personal information, in order to provide services in accordance with our charitable aims. We will never share your information with third parties, for marketing purposes. **Thank you for supporting us!**

You may change your communications preferences at any time at [woodenspoon.org.uk/opt-in](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/opt-in)

Our data privacy policy can be found at [woodenspoon.org.uk/privacy-policy/](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/privacy-policy/)

# 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, complete your details and return this page to: Wooden Spoon, Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hants GU51 2UZ.

\*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](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/privacy-policy) for more information.

# o'neills

SINCE 1918



NEAR YOU

# 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](mailto:bedfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/bedfordshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/bedfordshire)

## BRISTOL & BATH

**Chairman:** Bob Densley  
[bristolbath@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:bristolbath@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/bristol-bath](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/bristol-bath)

## CHILTERN

**Chairman:** Ray Hague  
[chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/chilterns](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/chilterns)

## CORNWALL

**Chairman:** Alan Milliner  
[cornwall@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:cornwall@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/cornwall](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/cornwall)

## CUMBRIA

**Chairman:** John Cunningham  
[cumbria@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:cumbria@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/cumbria](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/cumbria)

## DEVON

**Chairman:** Roger Haywood  
[devon@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:devon@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/devon](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/devon)

## DORSET & WILTSHIRE

**Chairman:** Justin Cliff  
[dorsetandwilts@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:dorsetandwilts@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/dorset-wiltshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/dorset-wiltshire)

## DURHAM

**Chairman:** Paul Tully  
[durham@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:durham@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/durham](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/durham)

## EASTERN COUNTIES

**Chairman:** Séamus Farrelly  
[eastern@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:eastern@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/eastern-counties](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/eastern-counties)

## ESSEX

**Chairman:** Matt Mitchell (interim)  
[essex@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:essex@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/essex](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/essex)

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE

**Chairman:** Rob York  
[gloUCEstershire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:gloUCEstershire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/gloUCEstershire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/gloUCEstershire)

## GUERNSEY

**Chairwoman:** Karen Solway  
[guernsey@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:guernsey@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/guernsey](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/guernsey)

## HAMPSHIRE

**Chairman:** Tony Wilkin  
[hampshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:hampshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/hampshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/hampshire)

## HERTFORDSHIRE

**Chairman:** John Batters  
[hertfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:hertfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/hertfordshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/hertfordshire)

## ISLE OF MAN

**Chairman:** Allan Thompson  
[isleofman@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:isleofman@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/isle-of-man](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/isle-of-man)

## JERSEY

**Chairman:** Roger Trower  
[jersey@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:jersey@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/jersey](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/jersey)

## KENT

**Chairman:** Richard Russ  
[kent@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:kent@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/kent](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/kent)

## LANCASHIRE

**Chairman:** Martin Long  
[lancashire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:lancashire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/lancashire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/lancashire)

## LEICESTERSHIRE

**Chairman:** Malcolm Foulkes-Arnold  
[leicester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:leicester@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/leicestershire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/leicestershire)

## LEINSTER

**Chairman:** Fergus Slattery  
[leinster@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:leinster@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/leinster](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/leinster)

## LONDON

**Chairwoman:** Rachel Zaltzman  
[london@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:london@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/london](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/london)

## MANCHESTER & CHESHIRE

**Chairman:** Roger Smith  
[manchester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:manchester@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/manchester-cheshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/manchester-cheshire)

## MERSEYSIDE

**Chairman:** Stan Bagshaw  
[merseyside@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:merseyside@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/merseyside](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/merseyside)

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

**Chairman:** Chris Fountain  
[northampton@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:northampton@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/northamptonshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/northamptonshire)

## NORTHUMBERLAND

**Chairman:** Anthony Stoker  
[northumberland@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:northumberland@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/northumberland](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/northumberland)

## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

**Chairwoman:** Diane Orson  
[nottingham@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:nottingham@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/nottinghamshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/nottinghamshire)

## OXFORDSHIRE

**Chairman:** Will Deeley  
[oxfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:oxfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/oxfordshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/oxfordshire)

## SCOTLAND

**Chairman:** Charlie Bryden  
[scotland@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:scotland@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/scotland](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/scotland)

## SHROPSHIRE

**Chairman:** Chris Bristow  
[shropshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:shropshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/shropshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/shropshire)

## SOMERSET

**Chairman:** David Reed  
[somerset@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:somerset@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/somerset](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/somerset)

## STAFFORDSHIRE

**Chairman:** Trevor Jenkins  
[staffordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:staffordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/staffordshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/staffordshire)

## SURREY

**Chairman:** Brian Hodges  
[surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/surrey](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/surrey)

## SUSSEX

**Chairman:** Sandy Fleming  
[sussex@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:sussex@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/sussex](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/sussex)

## ULSTER

**Chairman:** Peter Wood  
[ulster@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:ulster@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/ulster](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/ulster)

## WALES

**Chairman:** Huw Thomas  
[wales@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:wales@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/wales](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/wales)

## WARWICKSHIRE

**Chairman:** Ian Holroyd  
[warwickshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:warwickshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/warwickshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/warwickshire)

## WEST MIDLANDS

**Chairman:** Martin Owen  
[westmidlands@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:westmidlands@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/west-midlands](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/west-midlands)

## WORCESTERSHIRE

**Chairman:** John Gibson  
[worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/worcestershire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/worcestershire)

## YORKSHIRE

**Chairman:** Stuart Watson  
[yorkshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:yorkshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/yorkshire](http://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](mailto:regions@woodenspoon.org.uk)

# 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](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/events) for a full list

## 3 OCTOBER

Worcestershire  
Worcestershire First  
Thursday Club  
[worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 4 OCTOBER

Hertfordshire  
Hertfordshire Golf Day  
[hertfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:hertfordshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Leicestershire  
Leicestershire Oktoberfest  
[leicester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:leicester@woodenspoon.org.uk)

National  
Run the Ramparts  
Sold out (see page 37)

Eastern Counties  
Woodbridge School Fundraising  
Dinner  
[eastern@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:eastern@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 8 OCTOBER

National  
Scrum Dine With Me (page 26)  
[events@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:events@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 12 OCTOBER

Essex  
World Cup Breakfast  
[essex@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:essex@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Sussex  
Crowborough RFC: It's a Knockout  
and Veterans match  
[sussex@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:sussex@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Worcestershire  
England v France World Cup  
Breakfast  
[worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 22 OCTOBER

Wales  
Wooden Spoon Wales Quiz  
[wales@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:wales@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 1 NOVEMBER

Chilterns  
Wooden Spoon & GFLC RWC Lunch  
[chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Merseyside  
Wooden Spoon World Cup Forum  
[merseyside@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:merseyside@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 2 NOVEMBER

Ulster  
World Cup Final Breakfast  
[ulster@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:ulster@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 7 NOVEMBER

Scotland  
Edinburgh Dinner  
[scotland@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:scotland@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Worcestershire  
An Evening with Matt Dawson MBE  
[worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 9 NOVEMBER

Guernsey  
West End Music Magic  
[guernsey@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:guernsey@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 14 NOVEMBER

Gloucestershire  
Gloucestershire Annual Dinner  
[gloucestershire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:gloucestershire@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 15 NOVEMBER

Lancashire  
Lancashire Annual Luncheon  
[lancashire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:lancashire@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Wales  
Wooden Spoon Wales & The  
Concrete Society Autumn Lunch  
Sold out

## 21 NOVEMBER

Worcestershire  
Worcestershire Annual Race Night  
[worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:worcester@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 22 NOVEMBER

Merseyside  
Merseyside Annual Sporting Lunch  
[merseyside@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:merseyside@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Surrey  
Rugby Clubs' Curry Lunch

[surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 5 DECEMBER

Devon  
The Exeter Chiefs Foundation &  
Wooden Spoon Devon's Annual  
Christmas Lunch  
[devon@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:devon@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 6 DECEMBER

Warwickshire  
Warwickshire Christmas Lunch  
[warwickshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:warwickshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)

National  
Wooden Spoon Vets vs British Army  
Vets  
[rugby@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:rugby@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 8 DECEMBER

Chilterns  
Chilterns Carol Cruise  
[chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:chilterns@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## 11 DECEMBER

Sussex  
Christmas Lunch on Brighton Pier







[sussex@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:sussex@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 13 DECEMBER

Yorkshire

**Yorkshire Christmas Sporting Lunch**

[yorkshire@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:yorkshire@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 24 JANUARY

Cornwall

**Dinner with Wayne Barnes**

[cornwall@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:cornwall@woodenspoon.org.uk)

Kent

**Kent Rugby Clubs Dinner**

[kent@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:kent@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 19 MARCH

Surrey

**Surrey Sportsman's Dinner**

[surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 1 MAY

Durham

**Durham Golf Day**

[durham@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:durham@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 7 MAY

National

**Wooden Spoon Vets Dunkerque 80 & VE Day 75 tour**

[rugby@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:rugby@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 8 MAY

Dorset & Wiltshire

**Victory in Europe**

**Celebration Golf Day**

[dorsetandwilts@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:dorsetandwilts@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 7 JUNE

Kent

**Mid Kent Club Together Cycle**

[kent@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:kent@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 11 JUNE

Surrey

**Surrey Regional Golf Day**

[surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:surrey@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 12 JUNE

Kent

**West Kent Golf Day**

[kent@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:kent@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 3 JULY

Cornwall

**Cornwall Golf Day**

[cornwall@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:cornwall@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 17 JULY

Kent

**East Kent Golf Day**

[kent@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:kent@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 21 AUGUST

Kent

**Kent Rugby Club Golf Challenge**

[kent@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:kent@woodenspoon.org.uk)

### 1 OCTOBER

National

**Rugby Club Golf Challenge**

**National Final**

[events@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:events@woodenspoon.org.uk)

For a full list of Wooden Spoon fundraisers and charity challenges, check out our website at:  
[woodenspoon.org.uk/events](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/events)



# EX-ENGLAND STAR RETURNS TO THE MIX

**W**OODEN Spoon Merseyside is celebrating a star signing after securing the services of World Cup winner Gill Burns.

The former England skipper has joined the region's committee, marking a new chapter in her long-running association with the children's charity of rugby.

Gill, who captained her country between 1994 and 1999 and starred in four World Cups, said: 'It's a tremendous privilege to be able to join Wooden Spoon Merseyside, having supported the charity for many years.'

"I was first involved when I was England captain and was lucky enough to present some money on behalf of the charity; I remember handing it over on a huge wooden spoon to Birmingham Women's Hospital.

"I also played in the Wooden Spoon Veterans Lionesses team at the Bermuda Classics tournament in 2007. The work the charity does is wonderful and I love helping to raise funds for such worthy causes."

The first woman to be made a Privileged Member of the RFU, Gill will juggle her Wooden Spoon role with that of President of Lancashire RFU.

**FLASHBACK**  
Former England star Gill Burns creates a stir at Birmingham Women's Hospital in 1998



Wooden Spoon Merseyside Chairman Stan Bagshaw described the high-profile volunteer as "an ideal choice" for his committee and welcomed the addition of someone boasting such a rich rugby pedigree.

Of the 1994 World Cup winner, he

said: "Gill is well respected and well known, and it's great to have a lady on our committee."

➤ **Want to know more about Gill's new teammates and their work? Visit [woodenspoon.org.uk/merseyside](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/merseyside)**

## BLACK COUNTRY BACK IN BUSINESS

AFTER a break from the fundraising game, Wooden Spoon West Midlands has returned to action.

The new-look regional committee is headed up by chairman Martin Owen, who has ties with Dunlop RFC and joined the children's charity of rugby squad to play in last year's Armistice Tour.

His relaunched line-up boasts the talents of Deborah Shakespeare (Regional Secretary), Greg Watts (Treasurer) and Cathal Lynch (Events Manager).

Wooden Spoon Staffordshire's Chairman Trevor Jenkins also joins the team.

The relaunched region is currently scouting for further recruits to help make a difference to young lives in the West Midlands.

➤ **If you would like to get involved, email [westmidlands@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:westmidlands@woodenspoon.org.uk), visit [woodenspoon.org.uk/west-midlands](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/west-midlands) or find them on Facebook (@WoodenSpoonWestMids).**





# SKELETONS SHAKE RHINOS

**F**OUR tries from England star Lewis King and five goals from skipper Fred Nye were not enough to secure Argonauts Skeleton Army a giant-killing in the final of this year's Rugby League Wheelchair Challenge Cup.

Up against a formidable and long-established Leeds Rhinos side, the first team of the Kent-based Wooden Spoon partner club The Argonauts more than held their own during an enthralling encounter at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield, but were eventually edged out 74-46.

Reaching the final – which was staged at one of the host venues for the 2021 Rugby League World Cup – marked an incredible achievement for the Dartford outfit, coming less than 18 months after its Premier League debut.

Ralph Rimmer, the chief executive of the Rugby Football League described some of the Argonauts play as “mesmerising” and Rhinos captain, James Simpson, was also quick to acknowledge his side had come up against opposition boasting some “brilliant players”.

Praising the performance, Wooden Spoon National Rugby Manager Matt Mitchell said: “We are proud to count

**SPORT FOR ALL**  
Find out how the children's charity of rugby has helped young people across the country to experience the sport that inspired its creation at [woodenspoon.org.uk/wheelchair-rugby](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/wheelchair-rugby)



Argonaut's international talent (from left): James Hazel (England), Peter Johnston (Ireland), Fred Nye (England), Joe Coyd (England) and Lewis King (England)

The Argonauts among our partner clubs – they are going from strength-to-strength and have assembled a talented squad which now includes four England players and one Ireland international (pictured above)."

The children's charity of rugby has been an ever-present supporter of the flourishing club since its formation in 2018 when Wooden Spoon Kent funded 10 specialist wheelchairs at a cost of £11,000.

The donation has enabled The Argonauts to hold training sessions for players of all abilities and introduce

new players to the exciting sport.

Wooden Spoon's Chief Executive Officer Sarah Webb added: "Our support of the club is a great example of how we can make a real difference to young lives. Wheelchair rugby affords those with a disability access to a fantastic team sport and all the advantages that brings – friendship, fun and improved physical and mental health."

➤ To find out more about The Argonauts, visit the club's Facebook page at [facebook.com/TheArgonautsWCS](https://facebook.com/TheArgonautsWCS)

## CAPTAINS UNITE FOR FINAL FUNDRAISER

FRESH from tackling Earth's highest mountain, Wooden Spoon's peak performers shared the highs and lows of their extraordinary expedition with an audience of 70 lucky guests in London.

Seasoned internationals Lee Mears, Tamara Taylor, Ollie Phillips and Shane Williams – who captained the world record-setting sides that contested the LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge (page 20) – took part in a compelling Q&A session at M Restaurant in the heart of the capital.

Those present at the event, which was compered by Andy Gomarsall, heard amusing anecdotes about mountain life from the four skippers in addition to stark accounts of altitude sickness, illness and extreme fatigue.



The captains also ensured the avalanche of money raised by their adventure rolled on – generously donating a unique auction lot each. Guests were invited to bid for a chance to train with England international Tamara, play a round of golf with former

England and Lions star Lee, have Wales' most-capped winger Shane speak at an event of their choice or climb a mountain with Sevens sensation Ollie.

Complemented by a raffle sponsored by LMAX Exchange and PING, the successful fundraiser generated in the region of £20,000 and the money will ensure Wooden Spoon can extend its support to projects across the UK and Ireland.

➤ It's not too late to help us raise a mountain of cash! To show your support of the LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge, visit [woodenspoon.org.uk/donate](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/donate), select "one-off donation" and include "Captains' Fundraiser" in the notes section.

# A SALUTE TO SIMON

Wooden Spoon Sussex helps to ensure rugby lover's legacy lives on

**R**EFLECTING on the success of the ninth annual tag rugby tournament held in his son's honour this May, Guy Viney praised the shoulder of support provided by Barns Green RFC and the compassion of his wider "rugby family".

The devoted dad told *Spoonnews* the Sevens competition – and the incredible £70,000 it has raised to date for charitable causes – would have made Simon "immensely happy".

A former teammate of his father and younger brother, rugby lover Simon was a regular fixture at Barns Green – a small, rural Sussex club close to Horsham – before his death at the age of 22 from a degenerative heart condition.

"The day shows the rugby family at its greatest," said Guy.

"It's always an emotional one, and I do have a sob to myself on the morning of the tournament, but I would not have got through the things I have had it not been for the rugby club and it's amazing to see the community come together for Simon.

"To see how the local area unites through tag rugby makes me incredibly proud."

Wooden Spoon Sussex has been a regular benefactor of the family-targeted tournament, which was this year contested by players ranging in age from four to 51, and committee member Alan Jenkins said the children's charity of rugby was honoured to be associated with the memorial event.

"We are privileged to be included in Simon's special day," he added. "Barns Green is a grassroots club in every sense and it is simply amazing to see the number of people on the day enjoying tag rugby with just the right hint of competitiveness.

"It is a tournament that has raised an enormous amount of money for various charities over the years and, through Wooden Spoon Sussex, that has been of enormous benefit to the special schools in the region.

"Projects funded by Simon's tournament have helped give enjoyment to, and improve the lives of, many young people with special needs."

Explaining that his son had learning difficulties himself, Guy said the choice of Wooden Spoon as a charity would have met with the devoted clubman's approval.

"I think Simon would be incredibly pleased to know the impact he has had," he added.

"He needed help and support during his life and he would be over the moon to know he was

**High-profile support:** This year's tournament was attended by Harlequins star Ross Chisholm, who is pictured presenting the trophy to a tiny member of the winning team, and alongside Simon's step-mother Karen and father Guy



“”

**Simon would be incredibly pleased to know the impact he has had. He needed help and support during his life and he would be over the moon to know he was helping to provide that to others**

helping to provide that to others."

Fittingly, Simon's old school – Manor Green College in Crawley – has directly benefited from Barns Green's fundraising efforts. Thanks to money donated from the tournament, Wooden Spoon Sussex supported the installation of a sensory room at the college for use by its students.

Plans for a 10th anniversary event on 17th May 2020 are already underway, although Guy – who was quick to attribute the repeated success of Simon's memorial competition to his partner Karen – is keeping the details under wraps.

"I've got a few ideas for some extra special activities, but I'm keeping them to myself for the time being," he concluded.

Whatever surprises are in store to celebrate

Simon's life, Bill Bailey, Barns Green RFC's president, said the day would be guaranteed to be a popular fixture.

"Everyone at the club thought a lot about Simon; he was always in and around the club," he added. "He was an ardent trainer, played for us a lot and loved being around the boys on the pitch and in the bar.

"As a player, he performed to the highest standard he could and he was very determined. There were plenty of times he got a bloody nose but picked himself up and kept going."

➤ **To find out more about the work of Wooden Spoon Sussex, its committee and the region's upcoming fundraising events, visit [woodenspoon.org.uk/sussex](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/sussex)**





# THANKS FOR PITCHING IN

Busy calendar of golf days generates significant wedge for Wooden Spoon

**W**HILE Wooden Spoon prides itself on improving young lives through the power of rugby, golf continues to be a major driver behind the children's charity's fundraising efforts.

This year alone, the sport – once unfairly described as a good walk spoiled – has already pitched in by holing in excess of £61,000 from more than 25 events.

Wooden Spoon Kent top the leaderboard in terms of golf days hosted, having held three

successful competitions so far in 2019. Contested by 77 teams at Knole Park and Sheerness Golf Club, the tournaments raised more than £22,000 and benefited from the talents of comedian Adger Brown as master of ceremonies and auctioneer.

Near neighbour Wooden Spoon Surrey held its annual fairway fundraiser at Cuddington Golf Club. The region's four-ball format attracted 24 teams and, following a prize-giving dinner, competitors were entertained by comic Paul Boardman.

The day's fundraising total surpassed £4,000 and the event provided Wooden Spoon Surrey with an opportunity to thank Cuddington's members for their generosity following the club captain's decision to name the region as his chosen charity – a gesture which delivered a donation of £13,500.

Lanhydrock Hotel and

Golf Club was the venue for Wooden Spoon Cornwall's annual golf day. Sponsored by Barclays, Sharp's Brewery and the Co-Operative, and raising money for potential projects such as a specialist playground for children with severe learning disabilities, the competition carded a fantastic £2,200.

Wooden Spoon Warwickshire hosted its Three Club Challenge at Finham Golf Club and a second event at Maxstoke Park Golf Club.

The former event raised more than £12,000, while the latter – which boasted Aaron James as master of ceremonies – amassed £3,750 and attracted 27 teams and a number of celebrity players.

The day's winning group, Oakwood Financial Investments, was led by Jas Jaspal and featured former Aston Villa star Lee Hendrie and Sheffield Wednesday footballer David Hirst.

► For a full list of upcoming golf days and other fundraisers, visit [woodenspoon.org.uk/events](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/events)



# KYRAN PROVES CHAT CREDENTIALS

**W**HEN you've captained your country, lifted a World Cup and danced on ice it is inevitable you've got plenty of tales to tell, so it was no surprise that Kyran Bracken did not find himself lost for words during Wooden Spoon's inaugural Speak-a-thon.

The marathon fundraiser saw the scrum half-turned-celebrated speaker take to the microphone for four successive dates in May – at events in four different counties – and raised more than £10,000 in support of children and young people with a disability or facing disadvantage.

Taking in Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent and Sussex, the tour featured amusing anecdotes from throughout Kyran's top-flight rugby career in addition to skating stories from his triumphant turn on ITV's *Dancing on Ice*.

The former Saracens star juggled his role of guest speaker with that of auctioneer and also challenged attendees of the events to successfully catch his infamous "bullet pass".

Harlow RFC hosted the four-day Speak-a-thon's first event on behalf of Wooden Spoon Essex and raised in excess of £2,000 towards the grand total.

James Crouch, Co-Vice Chairman of the newly-reformed regional committee, said: "We are very grateful to Kyran for helping us to make a difference here in Essex. We are a region with ambitious plans to improve the lives of those children and young

**CHATTY MAN**  
World Cup winner and *Dancing on Ice* champion Kyran Bracken had plenty to discuss during his marathon roadshow in aid of Wooden Spoon



people who, unlike many of us, will not have the opportunity to benefit from a lifetime of playing rugby."

The Co-Vice Chairman of Wooden Spoon Essex, Richard Austin, added: "It is with thanks to Harlow RFC's President, club members and the growing number of Wooden Spoon supporters in Essex who attended the evening that the event was a huge success. It was an entertaining evening all round."

Crowborough RFC provided Kyran's next stop and he was joined at the club by a 60-strong group of children's charity of rugby supporters, who contributed a further £3,000 to the fundraising tally.

Wooden Spoon Sussex committee member Alex Pincus was also quick to praise Kyran for giving up his time to help the region and thanked the

officers and members of Crowborough for hosting a fabulous evening.

Wooden Spoon Hertfordshire hosted the third night of the Speak-a-thon at Welwyn RFC and found Kyran on "sparkling form".

The speaker's refusal to take no for an answer during the evening's auction and the fines he handed out to those unable to handle one of his passes helped to raise an additional £2,700.

Patrick Micallef, one of the region's committee members, said: "It was nice to speak to and hear from an experienced rugby player and to know everyone in the room shared the same goal – to raise money for Wooden Spoon. Kyran's bullet passes were great fun and kept everyone alert."

The Freemasons' Spirit of Rugby Lodge 9922 combined with Wooden Spoon Kent to close the tour with a three-course carvery lunch.

Guests were welcomed to the Cornwallis Suites in Maidstone by the lodge's Worshipful Master Bob Mitchell and helped to raise more than £2,000.

Reflecting on the four days of functions, Wooden Spoon's National Rugby Manager Matt Mitchell concluded: "It was a privilege to host Kyran, who has proved himself as a top after-dinner speaker.

"It is great to see former high-profile players helping to promote traditional rugby values and generously connecting with the rugby family at Wooden Spoon events."

## STAFFORDSHIRE

# RUGELEY RECORD TERRIFIC TREBLE

PAST and present players, supporters and members of Rugeley Rugby Club took to their bikes, the dance floor and the Welsh mountains to raise in the region of £8,000 for Wooden Spoon.

The Staffordshire-based team opted to kick-off a series of fundraisers wearing cycling shoes, with a squad of 18 riders – aged from 18 to 76-years old – tackling the Tissington trail.

After clocking up more than 100 miles on the saddle, and following a change into dancing shoes, the group joined 150-plus revellers for a Motown disco at the club.

Hiking boots became the final choice of



footwear for the benevolent club as 15 people climbed Snowdon to cap off a fantastic fundraising hat-trick for the children's charity of rugby.

## RIDING RECEPTION

WOODEN Spoon was in attendance as the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) celebrated its 50th anniversary during its National Championships at Hartpury College in Gloucester this summer. The flagship annual event brings together hundreds of competitors of all ages and abilities in events including dressage, show-jumping and vaulting. The children's charity of rugby has funded in excess of 40 RDA-associated projects across the UK and Ireland. Pledging more than half-a-million pounds of support, Wooden Spoon has helped to fund new horses, horse boxes and indoor riding arenas for use by children with a disability.



# DYNAMIC DUO JOIN DURHAM



**T**WO giants of the national game have been appointed as honorary presidents of Wooden Spoon Durham and committed to championing the children's charity of rugby.

England's second most-capped woman Tamara Taylor and Newcastle Falcons stalwart Rob Vickers have both enjoyed stellar careers on the pitch and hope to use their popularity to raise money for, and awareness of, the fantastic work of the regional committee.

One of the LMAX Exchange Everest Rugby Challenge record breakers, Tamara was crowned RPA Player of

the Year in 2017 and 2015 Premiership Player of the Year and helped guide the Red Roses to World Cup glory in 2014. The lock, who has just completed her 14th year as an international, played in every match of England's Six Nations Grand Slam win in 2018 and four of the five games at the World Cup that followed.

Tamara's new teammate Rob retired from playing rugby last year having spent his entire professional career at Kingston Park.

The long-serving front-row forward notched up more than 250 appearances for the Falcons, having made his competitive debut during the 2006-07 season, and was awarded a testimonial year for his loyalty to the Newcastle club in 2017.

On the next chapter of her association with the children's charity of rugby, Tamara said: "I am really looking forward to taking on the role of honorary president alongside Rob Vickers. Wooden Spoon is such a brilliant charity and having been to Everest with them, I now want to help support the committee and volunteers working in my local area."

The pair have already been called into action and were given an opportunity to see first-hand the positive impact of the children's charity of rugby during a visit to Zoe's Place Baby Hospice in Middlesbrough.

**DOUBLE ACT:**  
Wooden Spoon Durham's honorary presidents Tamara Taylor (above) and Rob Vickers (left)

The home-from-home provides palliative, respite and end-of-life care to babies and infants aged from birth to five years suffering from life-limiting or life-threatening conditions, and recently benefited from Wooden Spoon funding. Money raised by partners Rugbytots enabled the hospice to source specialist therapy cots that can be adjusted to suit the needs of each child.

Paul Tully, Chairman of Wooden Spoon Durham, said: "It is fantastic to have the support of Tamara and Rob in our region. We hope their support will raise awareness of the life-changing work that we are planning to do in the Durham community to help children with disabilities or facing disadvantage."

➤ To find out more about the activities of Wooden Spoon Durham and how you can get involved, contact the regional committee via email at [durham@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:durham@woodenspoon.org.uk)



## HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY

WOODEN Spoon is assembling a squad of veteran rugby players aged 35 and over to represent the charity on a once-in-a-lifetime tour to France. The group will travel to France in May next year and take part in commemoration events to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day and 80th anniversary of the evacuation of Dunkirk.

Those wishing to salute the courage and sacrifice of their forebears while raising funds to help future generations should contact Matt via [rugby@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:rugby@woodenspoon.org.uk) for details.

## FRENCH FUNDRAISER

THIS autumn will see 14 Wooden Spoon challengers lace up their running shoes for a race around the ramparts of the medieval city of Laon in northern France.

The 10km evening run, which takes place on 5 October, affords entrants views of the former capital's iconic Gothic cathedral.

On a mission to raise a minimum of £500 each, the runners will be rewarded for their efforts with a celebratory meal before returning home the following day.





# ANNIVERSARY DINNER

This autumn will see Wooden Spoon celebrate a decade of dining as we serve up our 10th Scrum Dine With Me. A popular place-setting on the children's charity of rugby's events' calendar, the cooking contest pits big-name players against each other at a professional restaurant's pass. The most recent foodie fixture was attended by more than 150 guests and saw former England and Bath hooker Lee Mears emerge triumphant from the heat of London's Cinnamon Kitchen. The event, which was compèred by Sevens supremo and lead ambassador Ollie Phillips, raised an incredibly satisfying £20,000 for Wooden Spoon. Previous culinary contenders include Andy Gomarsall, Phil Vickery, Maggie Alphonsi and Jason Leonard. The 10th anniversary event is being held on 8 October, but we are now taking reservations for next year's fundraising feast – which will be held on 24 March and again tantalise the taste buds with a blend of rugby royalty and celebrated chefs. If you are interested in booking a seat, email [events@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:events@woodenspoon.org.uk)





## PROJECT OPENINGS

# OPEN FOR BUSINESS

We make a difference to young lives across the United Kingdom and Ireland, the following pages will take you on a tour of our recent success stories...



**WOODEN SPOON LANCASHIRE**  
Red Marsh School (page 48)

**WOODEN SPOON WARWICKSHIRE**  
Bedworth Heath Maintained Nursery School

**WOODEN SPOON SCOTLAND**  
Volunteer Development East Lothian – STRIVE (page 46)  
Team Jak Foundation



**WOODEN SPOON YORKSHIRE**  
Ebor Vale RDA  
West Leeds ARLFC  
West Road Primary School (page 43)  
WHISH (pictured, page 45)

**WOODEN SPOON LEICESTERSHIRE**  
Rutland Sailability (page 44)

**WOODEN SPOON GLOUCESTERSHIRE**  
Alderman Knight School

**WOODEN SPOON EASTERN COUNTIES**  
Barking & Dagenham Youth Zone (page 47)

**WOODEN SPOON SURREY**  
Transform Housing & Support

**WOODEN SPOON SUSSEX**  
Pippa's Group (page 47)

**WOODEN SPOON KENT**  
Oakley Primary School

# FUTURE FUNDING

Since 1983, we have committed in excess of £28 million to 1,000 plus projects and our drive to support young people has benefited more than one million lives. The following schemes, schools and services – approved for funding during the last six months – are set to further swell these numbers...

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### Coventry Wheelchair Rugby Club

Wooden Spoon Warwickshire

### Solent Sharks Wheelchair RC

[teamsolent.com/wheelchair-rugby](http://teamsolent.com/wheelchair-rugby)

Wooden Spoon Hampshire

## PLAYGROUNDS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

### Bright Sparks Playgroup

Wooden Spoon Scotland

### Corrymeela Centre

[corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

Wooden Spoon Ulster

### Cricket Green School

[cricketgreen.merton.sch.uk](http://cricketgreen.merton.sch.uk)

National

### Farney Close School

[farneyclose.co.uk](http://farneyclose.co.uk)

Wooden Spoon Sussex

### Footprints Family Centre

[buttershawfootprints.org.uk](http://buttershawfootprints.org.uk)

Wooden Spoon Yorkshire

### Hawes Down Primary School

[hdps.org.uk](http://hdps.org.uk)

Wooden Spoon Kent

### Include Us

[includeus.org.uk](http://includeus.org.uk)

Wooden Spoon Scotland

### Let's Play Project

[letsplaybanbury.org](http://letsplaybanbury.org)

Wooden Spoon Oxfordshire

### Lochbroom Community Council

[ullapoolcommunity.org](http://ullapoolcommunity.org)

Wooden Spoon Scotland



**Plans with prospects:** Upcoming projects will deliver short- and long-term benefits – as demonstrated by our support of the Freddie Farmer Foundation (inset, page 8) and The Usual Place (opposite, page 12)

### Pals of the Privies

Wooden Spoon Scotland

### Prior's Court School

[priorscourt.org.uk](http://priorscourt.org.uk)

Wooden Spoon Chilterns

### Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School

Wooden Spoon Sussex

### Read for Good

[readforgood.org](http://readforgood.org)

National

### Ridgeway School

[ridgewayschool.com](http://ridgewayschool.com)

Wooden Spoon Bedfordshire

### The Broomhouse Centre

Wooden Spoon Scotland

### Warren School

[warrenschoo.co.uk](http://warrenschoo.co.uk)

Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties

### Ysgol Hen Felin

[ysgolhenfelin.org.uk](http://ysgolhenfelin.org.uk)

Wooden Spoon Wales

## SENSORY ROOMS AND GARDENS

### Foxgloves Children's Home

[bedford.gov.uk](http://bedford.gov.uk) › [foxgloves](http://foxgloves)

Wooden Spoon Bedfordshire

### Great Arley School

[great-arley.lancsngfl.ac.uk](http://great-arley.lancsngfl.ac.uk)

Wooden Spoon Lancashire

### Kirkriggs School

[kirkriggs-pri.glasgow.sch.uk](http://kirkriggs-pri.glasgow.sch.uk)

Wooden Spoon Scotland

### Legacy Youth Zone

[legacyyouthzone.org](http://legacyyouthzone.org)

Wooden Spoon Surrey

### Le Rondin School and Centre

[gov.gg/lerondin](http://gov.gg/lerondin)

Wooden Spoon Guernsey

### Limpsfield Grange School

[limpsfieldgrange.co.uk](http://limpsfieldgrange.co.uk)

Wooden Spoon Surrey

### Menphys

[menphys.org.uk](http://menphys.org.uk)

Wooden Spoon Leicestershire

### Renfrew YMCA SCIO

Wooden Spoon Scotland

### St Aidan's Primary School

[blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/nl/staidansps](http://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/nl/staidansps)





*ferringcountrycentre.org*  
Wooden Spoon Sussex

**Foyle Down Syndrome Trust**  
*foyledownsyndrometrust.org*  
Wooden Spoon Ulster

**Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity**  
Wooden Spoon Scotland

**Inspire Alpine**  
*inspire-alpine.com*  
Wooden Spoon Scotland

**Jigsaw Family Support**  
National

**Les Hoey MBE Dreammaker Foundation**  
Wooden Spoon Scotland

**Ocean Youth Trust Scotland**  
*oytscotland.org.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Scotland

**Ponies Help Children**  
Wooden Spoon Scotland

**Sidestrand Hall School**  
*sidestrandhall.org.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Eastern Counties

**Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship CIC**  
*sironaequine.org.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Devon

**Swansea Centre for Deaf People**  
*swanseadeafcentre.org.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Wales

**Sowenna**  
*sowenna.cornwallft.nhs.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Cornwall

**Thames Hospice**  
*thameshospice.org.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Chilterns

**The Larder Cook School**  
*thelardercookschool.org.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Scotland

**Ufton Court Educational Trust**  
*uftoncourt.co.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Chilterns

[woodenspoon.org.uk/our-grants](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/our-grants)

Wooden Spoon Scotland

**St Gerard's Special School**  
*stgerardsss.co.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Ulster

## SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

**1st Carnforth Scouts**  
Wooden Spoon Lancashire

**Abbey Court School**  
*abbeycourt.medway.sch.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Kent

**Bridgend Farmhouse**  
*bridgendfarmhouse.org.uk*  
Wooden Spoon Scotland

**Castle Business & Enterprise College**  
*castlebusinessenterprisecollege.co.uk*

Wooden Spoon West Midlands

**Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project**  
Wooden Spoon Northumberland

**Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity**  
*echcharity.org*  
Wooden Spoon Scotland

**Ferring Country Centre**

# FAVOURABLE FEEDBACK

We don't do what we do for praise, but the team at Wooden Spoon is always delighted to hear from those helped by our projects. The letters featured below are a snapshot of the type of post that puts a smile on our faces...

Dear Barry,

Wooden Spoon Society and Treloar Trust, Grant Ref CAP1016

Thank you so much for such a swift payment of the Society's grant of £12,000 agreed in March 2019. I confirm that the payment was made into Treloar's bank account today. We are all delighted that you and your fellow Trustees have chosen to continue supporting Treloar's and the work we do with severely disabled young people. Our formal receipt for the gift is enclosed.

The donation has been used to instal six new hoists in Gloucester House, one of our residential houses on the campus. These have already made a difference to students and staff. As part of our commitment to provide reporting and feedback, I felt you would appreciate a couple of quotes from staff. I will probably repeat these in more formal reporting, but these are positive and I wanted to share them now:

"The report is that the slings are really good. They are smooth and quiet. The best thing is their ability to move more freely, this makes manual handling and transfers a lot more comfortable for the students. For those students who have their beds up against a wall it has solved an annoying part of their day to day issues with trying to hoist over the end of the bed to be in line with the old hoists."

"One of my students had a new hoist fitted in his bedroom and it is so much better than the old one. The track is amazing and also the hoist itself is so much more reliable than the old one (the old hoist used to stop and start during transferring student and also the control box used to come away from the cord). This was not reassuring for the student."

I look forward to working with you and your team and we would welcome visitors at any time. Term-time is best. The students have just finished the academic year and have had an outdoor music festival and sports days as part of their end of year celebrations.

On behalf of all of us at Treloar's, thank you once again for your most generous and continued support.

Yours sincerely  
*Judith M Connors*

Judith M Connors  
Liveries' Manager

Direct Line: 01420 547456  
Email: [judith.connors@treloar.org.uk](mailto:judith.connors@treloar.org.uk)

Dear Wooden Spoon charity,

Thank you so much for your generous donation of £20,000. All of the children in West Road really appreciate your generosity. Your money has been purchased to fund our MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). The MUGA will support our physical learning and provide lots of opportunities for more active students.

We were actually lucky enough for the Archbishop of York to officially open our MUGA on 13th June this year.

On behalf of the whole community of Moorends we once again would like to say thanks we really appreciate it.

Kind Regards

Kiera Goshen Class 8 and the rest of West Road

Dear Wooden Spoon charity,

Thank you so much for the awesome donation of £20,000. All of West Road really appreciate your generosity. Your money has been used to fund our MUGA (multi, use, games, area). The MUGA will support our physical learning and provide lots of opportunities for more sporting event. We were lucky enough for the Arch Bishop of York to come and officially open our MUGA on 13th June this year.

On behalf of the whole of the community of Moorends, we want to say again thank you for your donation.

Kind Regards

Lorijai Taylor-Barwell and the whole of West Road Primary School

Dear Wooden Spoon Charity,  
Thank you so much for your kind donation of £20,000. All of the students at West Road really appreciate your generosity.

Your money has been spent to fund our MUGA (Multi use games area). The MUGA will support our physical learning and give lots of opportunities for more sporting events.

We were lucky enough for the Archbishop of York to officially open our MUGA on 13th June this year.

On behalf of our whole community of Thorne Moorends, Doncaster, we once again Thank you for your donation.

Kind regards  
Loretta Knott and the whole of West Road.





# SPORTING ALL-ROUNDER

Wooden Spoon Yorkshire helps primary school level the wellbeing playing field



## WHO

Wooden Spoon Yorkshire

## WHERE

West Road Primary School

## WHAT

Multi Use Games Area

## HOW MUCH

£20,000

## THEY SAID

*"West Road strongly believe that all children regardless of their backgrounds should have the same opportunities as others in more affluent areas – that poverty will not be a barrier."*

PUPILS being educated in Moorends near Doncaster have seen their school's sports provision transformed by the creation of an outdoor Multi Use Games Area.

Part funded by a £20,000 donation from Wooden Spoon Yorkshire, the new facilities mean students attending West Road Primary School can now enjoy activities such as basketball, cricket, football, netball and tennis all year round.

Previously, opportunities for outdoor exercise at the school – which is located in an area where the proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged is almost twice the national average – were limited by a boggy sports field that became inaccessible in bad weather and prevented West Road children from hosting community events such as inter-school tournaments.

The games area was officially opened by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, and Wooden Spoon Trustee Richard Smith, and is a welcome boost to the wellbeing of the school's

student body, almost half of which is eligible for free school meals.

Headteacher Kathy Thompson, said: "At West Road Primary, the children are at the heart of everything we do. We have been heavily involved with a range of extracurricular activities that look at developing essential life skills; helping children develop skills such as confidence, motivation, resilience and communication – all crucial in enabling young people to reach their

full potential. West Road strongly believe that all children regardless of their backgrounds should have the same opportunities as others in more affluent areas – that poverty will not be a barrier.

"We turn mirrors into windows."

➤ To find out more about the children's charity of rugby's events and its support of projects, visit [woodenspoon.org.uk/yorkshire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/yorkshire)





# TRANQUIL WATERS

Wooden Spoon Leicestershire adopts a different tack to giving

## WHO

Wooden Spoon Leicestershire

## WHERE

Rutland

## WHAT

Two dinghies

## HOW MUCH

£13,000

A CHARITY providing youngsters with a disability an opportunity to dip their toes into the sport of sailing can now open up the water to greater numbers thanks to the support of Wooden Spoon Leicestershire.

The regional committee of the children's charity of rugby provided a £13,000 grant to Rutland Sailability for the purchase of two specially-adapted Hansa dinghies.

Ideal for beginners due to their small size and simple controls, the boats were named by young sailors benefiting from the services of the Rutland Sailing Club-based group.

The budding boatmen selected *Hope* and *This Is Me* – inspired by a track from hit musical *The Greatest*

*Showman* – and Wooden Spoon Leicestershire committee members Malcolm Foulkes-Arnold, Bledwyn Jones, John Harlow, Duncan Jefferson and Simon Whitaker were delighted to test the fleet's water worthiness.

Rutland Sailability is well-known in the region for its excellent work in introducing sailing to children and

young people with a disability in Rutland, Leicestershire and the East Midlands, and giving youngsters a healthy focus and sense of freedom.

► Got any good ideas to float past Leicestershire's regional committee? Contact details can be found at [woodenspoon.org.uk/leicestershire](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/leicestershire)





# A WHISH COME TRUE

A SUPPORT group for young people with hidden impairments in Whitby has a new suite of electronic equipment and mats for its sensory rooms thanks to a £13,865 grant from Wooden Spoon Yorkshire.

The kit is already proving a hit with visitors to WHISH (Whitby Hidden Impairments Support & Help), which was set up by a group of parents who wanted to reduce their families' isolation and give their children positive experiences.

Stuart Watson, the chairman of Wooden Spoon Yorkshire, said the sensory rooms provide a calming refuge for those suffering with hidden impairments – which include conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome, autism, Tourette's and epilepsy – and helped to improve users' hand-eye coordination as well as reducing aggression.

"It's a marvellous project in an area where children are economically disadvantaged," he added.

"It is pleasing to see the benefit provided to the children from having the facility."

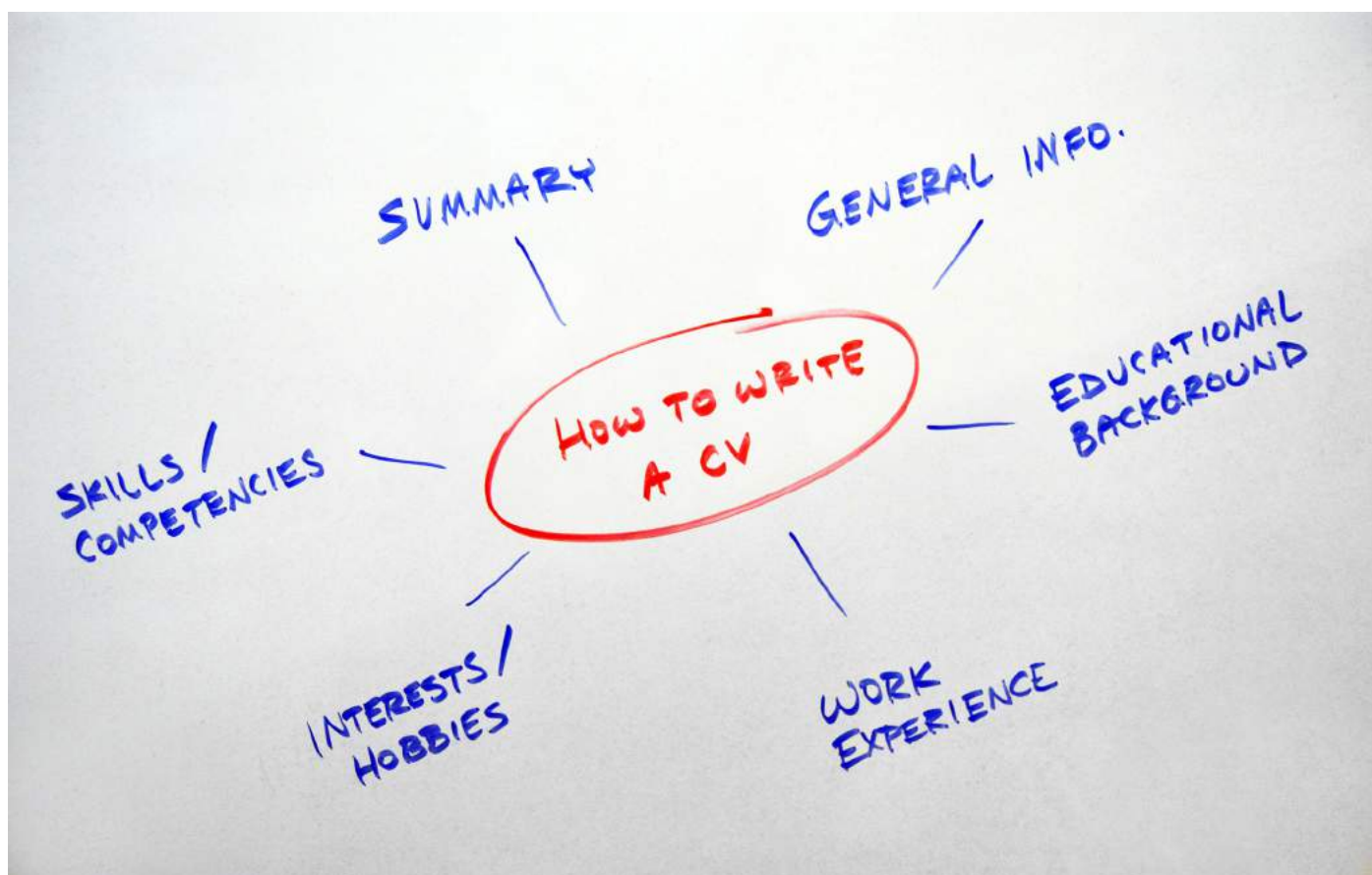
Gemma Brew, Chair of WHISH, which runs activities such as swimming, sports sessions and coffee mornings throughout the year and delivers training for parents and professionals, said: "Our heartfelt thanks from the children and families in WHISH go to Wooden Spoon for this donation."

"It has been used to provide sensory and active equipment for the children in the local area with impairments and disabilities."

➤ Want to get involved with Wooden Spoon in your region? Find your nearest regional committee at [woodenspoon.org.uk/near-you](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/near-you)







# STRIVING FOR CHANGE

Children's charity of rugby support sharpens youngsters' future job prospects

**W**OODEN Spoon Scotland has helped to bolster the employability and feel-good factor of disadvantaged young people in East Lothian by transforming facilities at a life skills and training centre.

An £18,000 grant from the children's charity of rugby has enabled STRiVE, which provides support, learning and development opportunities through volunteering, organisational support and youth wellbeing teams, to overhaul facilities at its centre in Tranent.

The makeover has seen a number of basic meeting rooms become a multi-purpose facility boasting a fully-equipped kitchen, computers and smart screen.

Officially opened by former Edinburgh stalwart and Scotland prop Allan "Chunk" Jacobsen, the Wooden Spoon Lifeskills and

Training Centre now offers 12 to 25-year-olds not in mainstream education access to a range of courses, including food preparation, first aid, CV writing and music.

Before the refurbishment work, young people had to travel up to two hours to reach an equivalent training centre.

Elliot Stark, the chief executive

of STRiVE, said: "This funding from Wooden Spoon Scotland to help with our facilities will really help us to offer more and more people from Tranent and the rest of the county a quality service and to have Chunk here to meet some of our young people was just the icing on the cake."

Allan added: "I think it is great to see the work that Wooden

Spoon Scotland and STRiVE do to help young people as everyone deserves opportunities in life.

"As a proud man from East Lothian, I am very passionate that youngsters from the area should be given chances to flourish and places like STRiVE can really help them to do that, there are exciting times ahead."

Gavin Hastings (page 13), honorary president of Wooden Spoon Scotland, said: "The guys at STRiVE do a great job helping young people and giving them opportunities. Wooden Spoon Scotland were delighted to help them improve their facilities and we know Allan Jacobsen enjoyed meeting some of the youngsters who benefit from STRiVE. We look forward to hearing how things continue to grow there."



[woodenspoon.org.uk/scotland](http://woodenspoon.org.uk/scotland)



# A WELCOME LIFT

**S**TUDENTS at a specialist school in Alton have been given a greater degree of independence thanks to an uplift in the availability and quality of hoists in its residential houses.

A £12,000 grant from Wooden Spoon Hampshire has enabled Treloar School and College, which provides education, care, therapy and medical support to young people with physical difficulties, to fit four new systems in students' rooms. The hoists are helping Treloar's deliver on its aim of preparing young people for adult life by enabling students to develop self-reliance and have also given them freedom to arrange their rooms as they wish.

Rather than relying on the fixed positioning of older equipment, the new kit's gantry mechanism provides movement anywhere in a room and also gives the user additional physical support.

Barry Monahan, Chief Operating Officer at the children's charity of rugby, said: "We are delighted to see the positive changes the new hoists have brought to the students and staff at Treloar's. We are also grateful to the support of Arjo, who were able to offer two extra hoists in addition to those supplied by the Wooden Spoon grant."

Jon Colville, Director of Fundraising at the Treloar Trust, underlined the benefits brought to students. "Six of our students now



have the best possible mobility in their study bedrooms," he said. "Many of our students experience severely-limited movement and the hoists give them some choice and control over their own movement. Furthermore, staff who work there are protected

from the physical risk of manual lifting students.

A team leader at Treloar's added: "One of my students had a new hoist fitted in his bedroom and it is so much better than the old one. The track is amazing and the hoist itself is so much more reliable."



## SUSSEX SUCCESS

THIS summer saw Wooden Spoon Sussex officially open its 24th project in support of children with a disability or facing disadvantage in the region.

Pippa's Group, a pre-school nursery based in Lewes, became the committee's latest beneficiary and can now count an interactive sensory room among its facilities thanks to a £12,127 donation from the children's charity of rugby.

The hi-tech addition was officially opened in July and representatives from Brighton, Haywards Heath and Lewes Rugby Clubs were among the first to see the pre-school's children experience their new play area.

Each of the clubs contributed to the project, with Lewes Ladies pledging £531.52 from their fundraising efforts at the Brighton Marathon and Brighton Beach Rugby Festival.

In thanking Wooden Spoon for its support, Ruth O'Keefe, Pippa's Group's chair of Trustees, said all of the children had enjoyed the experience of being able to take a magic carpet ride made possible by the sensory room's state-of-the-art projector system.

# HAPPY HOMECOMING

**WORLD** Cup winner and Wooden Spoon ambassador Jason Leonard returned to his home county of Essex to officially open a new sensory room at the Future Youth Zone in Dagenham.

The fully-inclusive facility, funded using a £16,250 grant from the children's charity of rugby, offers young people with a wide range of disabilities and additional needs a quiet space to chill out between activities.

Jason, who began his career at Barking RFC, was presented with a thank you card from users of the centre – which can attract up to 350 children a day – during his visit.

Future Youth Zone Inclusion Coordinator Ella Okerenta said: "We are extremely grateful to Wooden Spoon for funding the incredible equipment we have in our sensory room.

"Since we opened, we have had a lot of young people with special needs and quite a few of them have stopped at the door with anxiety, unsure if they could come in and because of this room they have been able to.

"We had one young person who was unsure who came to this room, had the time of her life and made friends with another young person who suffers with anxiety too.

"It is already making a huge difference and enables all our sessions to be fully inclusive for all young people."

A spokesperson from OnSide, which plans to open Youth Zones in the most underprivileged areas in the country to give young people somewhere safe and inspiring to spend their leisure time, added: "A key benefit of the room is the respite it provides for families.

"Parents often struggle to find a youth centre for their child with disabilities, with not many of them having the requisite facilities or provision to respond to their additional needs. This sensory room not only provides a place where parents know their children are safe and getting the attention they require, but also that they are in an environment where they can learn and develop, which is often not available to them elsewhere. This respite is vital for the wellbeing of the family and enables parents to provide better support for their child."



# ENGAGING ADDITION

Wooden Spoon Lancashire help bring outdoor activities to the curriculum



## WHO

Wooden Spoon Lancashire

## WHERE

Red Marsh School

## WHAT

Sensory pads

## HOW MUCH

£21,215

## THEY SAID

*"We could not be more grateful to Wooden Spoon and their supporters for their generous donation towards this project."*

**A**SCHOOL specialising in education for two to 19-year-olds with severe and complex disabilities has praised the positive impact Wooden Spoon Lancashire has had on its students.

The regional committee of the children's charity of rugby partly funded state-of-the-art sensory pads at Red Marsh School in the village of Thornton, which has provided pupils with a safe and inclusive area for their PE and sports programmes.

Officially opened in May by Wooden Spoon Lancashire's honorary president – and England and Fylde legend – Sir Bill Beaumont, the interactive panels form part of a new outdoor activity area boasting specialist flooring that affords children a safe and comfortable environment in which to explore and experience, and an overhead canopy to ensure all-weather availability.

Reflecting on the difference made to her school by Wooden Spoon's £21,215 grant, head teacher Catherine Dellow said: "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.

"The outcomes for our pupils have

been enhanced by these bright and engaging spaces. Behaviour, social interaction and physical development have improved immensely for the pupils when they are using the sports pads. We could not be more grateful to Wooden Spoon and their supporters for their generous donation towards this project."

In turn, Wooden Spoon Lancashire's committee extended its gratitude to the Vera Wolstencroft Children and Animal Charitable Trust, which contributed 50 per cent of the donation to Red Marsh School.

Wooden Spoon's association with Red Marsh stretches back to 2005, when it provided £70,000 of funding towards the cost of a hydrotherapy pool for its students. Sarah Webb, Chief Executive of Wooden Spoon, concluded: "We are delighted to still be in a position to help the school and it is fantastic, 14 years on, to be helping another generation of its pupils."

► To watch a video on the official opening, which was produced by Blackpool Sixth Form College, visit [youtube.com/watch?v=VlvZW3Hmups](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlvZW3Hmups)



“”

**Our pupils have been enhanced by these bright and engaging spaces**



# ROOFTOP OASIS TO WELCOME FAMILIES

Wooden Spoon's relationship with cancer charity continues to blossom

**H**AVING experienced the horror of their youngest son being diagnosed with leukaemia at six-years-old and being told he only had a 30 per cent chance of survival, no one would have blamed Valerie and Bill Simpson had they chosen to isolate themselves from the cruelty of childhood cancers.

Years spent on hospital wards racked with worry would be more than enough exposure for most but, when Robert was eventually sent home in remission, the couple found they could not walk away.

Rather than race from the heartache and gruelling regime of seeing a loved one endure treatment, they chose to do the opposite and dedicated themselves to helping others through their own experiences.

"It was a long, long hard slog," Valerie told *Spoonews*.

"Our son had to have years of chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant but we were one of the lucky ones and we knew we had to give something back."

That something has become a 25-year commitment to Children with Cancer and Leukaemia Advice and Support for Parents (CCLASP), the charity they

founded to help children and teenagers suffering from cancer or leukaemia in Scotland.

Wooden Spoon Scotland has also stuck around, with the children's charity of rugby helping the Simpsons to provide a practical and emotional shoulder of support to diagnosed and bereaved families.

The relationship began nine years ago, when a £27,000 grant from Wooden Spoon assisted Valerie and Bill in opening the doors of CCLASP's respite and holiday home in the Perthshire countryside town of Muthill.

In "a pretty bad state of repair" beforehand, the funding helped to meet the cost of renovating the idyllic, three-bedroom cottage, which is now used daily by families seeking an escape.

"The cottage is used all year round," Valerie added. "Summer or winter, families love it because it offers total privacy."

"It's a home-from-home that provides families with a space to get away from everything and get their heads around what is happening – it gives families a chance to breathe."

Building on this welcome source of support, CCLASP is set to open a purpose-built centre close to the



“”

**Families will have a controlled environment in which to enjoy being outdoors without having to worry and the garden is south facing so it will get the sun from morning until late at night**

new Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh later this year.

The property, which was purchased using a donation from The Howat Foundation, realises Valerie's vision of all the things she wished she had access to during Robert's illness and will boast a rooftop garden funded by Wooden Spoon Scotland.

Explaining the value of the outdoor space created using a £21,000 grant from the children's charity of rugby, Valerie said: "When you are in hospital and get a chance to go out with your child, where do you go? The risk of infection is so great that you can't go to a mall or to watch a movie."

"Now families will have a controlled environment in which to enjoy being outdoors without having to worry and the garden is

south facing so it will get the sun from morning until late at night."

The garden will be the icing on the cake for a centre that will cater for a family's every need.

"The whole building has been designed with all the things I would have loved but didn't have," Valerie concluded. "People will be able to stay and relax or pop in for a homemade meal or to make pizza with their child."

"They won't have to pay £5 for a sandwich from a machine that they don't really want or may not be able to afford. My son always wanted my soup to eat but I was petrified to go home to make it as it seemed that every time I left the ward a child died."

"There is also a laundry room so parents don't need to always go home to clean clothing."

“”

**It's a home-from-home that provides families with a space to get away from everything and get their heads around what is happening – it gives families a chance to breathe**



## Continuing the perfect delivery by supporting Wooden Spoon

TNT's principal charitable partner since 1997.

We have worked closely to embrace social projects and activities which help children with disabilities, or facing disadvantage, have a better chance in life.

Our 22nd year anniversary saw the partnerships' total donations reach over £4 million, which is a result of pure dedication and

support from our colleagues and team members.

This year has seen colleagues from across the business coming together to raise funds for Wooden Spoon by running in marathons, enjoying charity breakfasts and simply by taking part in 'dress-down' Fridays.

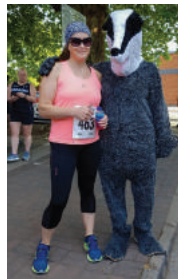
## Our colleagues continue to run that extra mile

A combined team of 40 runners from FedEx and TNT ran the Virgin Money London Marathon in April in aid of Wooden Spoon.

This was an enormous challenge, but one they accomplished with great effort and determination, with all our runners crossing the finish line successfully. Congratulations to all our runners for raising over £48,000 for Wooden Spoon.

Continuing with the running bug, a group of 10 runners entered this

year's BADGERS Atherstone 10k Race. The race, which welcomed runners of all abilities, was centred in the idyllic market town of Atherstone, Warwickshire and promised to offer runners some breath-taking countryside views whilst providing a great challenge. Congratulations to our BADGERS Atherstone 10k runners who raised over £1,000 for Wooden Spoon.



**Dave Copping**, Head of Continuous Improvement, TNT UK:

“ Although this race was a huge challenge and the hills were very daunting, I was so pleased to run in this locally based race and, of course, raise money for such a worthy cause. ”



## It's all about the game ...

In July a group of colleagues from FedEx Marston Gate Hub took up the challenge of a charity football competition in aid of Wooden Spoon.

There were 22 players, two lines men, one referee and two managers who took time out of their busy schedules to fundraise and enjoy an exciting game of football. Whilst the game took place, children were entertained with colouring competitions and those that were not in the team

entered into a penalty shootout, all to raise money for the charity.

The team raised over £600 for Wooden Spoon. It's days like this that has helped us raise over £4 million for Wooden Spoon during our 22 year relationship with them. The team thoroughly

enjoyed the day and asked when they would be arranging the next game. A great result!

A big thank you to all those who helped arrange and support this fantastic event.

**Lorraine Brown**, Supervisor from Marston Gate Hub, FedEx Express:

“ Although the day was so hot and regular water breaks were needed, everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves and enjoyed getting out with their colleagues and having a good kick around. The children were particularly happy as they all went home with a bag of sweets. It was great to be part of this day and to raise money for such a wonderful charity. ”





A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue shirt and a striped apron, stands with his arms crossed in a workshop. A bicycle is visible behind him.

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