

AUTUMN/WINTER 2021

SPOONNEWS

**GOING THE
DISTANCE**

Wooden Spoon
runners share
their stories

**IN THE
FRAME**

New hub brings
opportunities
for children



VETS FEST 21

A roaring success as
regions come together
to raise over £64,000



Wooden Spoon
The children's charity of rugby

WE NEED YOU!



Volunteer for Wooden Spoon

Our volunteers are integral to the success of the Wooden Spoon vision. To volunteer for Wooden Spoon all you need is enthusiasm and a desire to help and a small commitment from you could make a huge difference to local children living near you.

If volunteering for Wooden Spoon sounds like something you would enjoy, we would love to hear from you on charity@woodenspoon.org.uk



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



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Contact details for our regions can be found on page 27 and at woodenspoon.org.uk/near-you

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

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to Kent for winning the Olly Stephens Memorial Cup. Plans are already underway for Vets Fest 22, which will also include women's rugby for the first time.

A big thank you to everyone who ran for Wooden Spoon at the London Marathon, we salute you! See page 32 for the inspirational stories behind the runners who took on the 26-mile challenge.

I was lucky enough to be on the finishing line, at Whitley Bay, to welcome the Rugbytots riders in after completing their 200km cycle ride for the Coast 2 Coast Challenge, see page 31. We're always thankful to have the support of Rugbytots, and wish them all the best with their Try-athlon fundraising challenge.

We are hugely grateful for the support of FedEx over the last 24 years, and while we are sad that the collaboration is drawing to a close, the personal friendships that have been forged over this time will continue for years to come.

Many thanks to the unwavering support of our volunteers and supporters, it is so rewarding to see how everything you do makes a real difference to children and young people across the UK and Ireland.

Also, look out for our Christmas campaign, we hope you'll be able to get behind it this year. One of the ways you can help is to sign up a family member or a friend to support Wooden Spoon as a gift.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Spoonews, full of new projects that have been opened by our legendary Wooden Spoon ambassadors.

Please keep in touch with us at charity@woodenspoon.org.uk

Sarah Webb, CEO

GAME ON!

What a busy time, the diary is filling up again with events and activities across all our regions. You'll see in this edition of Spoonews projects are opening, money is being raised and children are being supported. So, it's game on as we drive forward.

I've loved being back, attending regional events and meeting so many of our wonderful supporters. It's great to see like-minded people coming together once more, sharing their passion for a greater cause.

Events are ramping up, see page 34, and as the calendar gets busier with inventive ideas for raising money, there are lots of opportunities for socialising and putting the fun back into fundraising.

Vets Fest 21 was a fantastic example of this, with over 420 players across 13 teams playing rugby to raise over £64,000. And, of course, there's the glory of the win – congratulations



Gold medallists Aaron Phipps and Jim Roberts

PARALYMPICS RUGBY GOLD

Team GB broke all records to become the first ever European nation to win gold in wheelchair rugby at the Paralympics this summer.

One of the gold medallists Aaron Phipps, who plays wheelchair rugby for Solent Sharks, a wheelchair rugby team funded by Wooden Spoon said: "This was a huge team effort and has been many years in the making.

"Going into the Paralympics ranked fourth in the world we knew this was going to be a tough tournament. It was strange not to have any live spectators but seeing all the messages from the rugby community and knowing our families were cheering us on at home was a huge boost.

"It is the most amazing feeling to win a gold medal and I am very proud to be part of the GB wheelchair

rugby team. Thank you to everyone who supported us from home, our coaches, support staff and everyone else who helps us."

Triple Paralympic Gold Medallist and Chair of Team Solent Sharks Wheelchair

Rugby Club, Peter Hull MBE, added: "GB beat USA and won Gold in the final of the Wheelchair Rugby at the Tokyo Paralympics. Every one of those player's dreams will have started, somewhere, whether it be a school, a rehab centre, or a club.

"But everyone knows you can't go too far in any sport unless you have the right equipment. Because of the nature of wheelchair rugby, this is particularly relevant.

"Every Paralympics inspires another generation. This is why the work of Wooden Spoon, in providing rugby chairs to the sporting youth of this country is so important. A huge thank you to all staff, volunteers and supporters."

"This was a huge team effort and has been many years in the making." *Aaron Phipps*



Solent Sharks in training

WOODEN SPOON AND BRAVE MIND TEAM UP

We are proud to be working in partnership with Brave Mind and a range of other charities supporting children and young people with mental health challenges.

Brave Mind is a registered mental health charity specifically supporting the rugby community. Their vision is that rugby plays a positive leadership role in embracing matters of mental health and providing a 'stigma free' environment to share, support and heal.

Wooden Spoon CEO, Sarah Webb, said: "Rugby, and sport in general, can be such a powerful vehicle to promote positive mental health and get people talking about it, without stigma. We are delighted that we can help spread the word about Brave Mind and the excellent work they are doing in this field."

Founder and ex-rugby player Simon Trower has experienced depression and anxiety



Simon Trower

himself, and knows the value of mental health awareness and support networks.

Simon explained: "At Brave Mind, we will make talking about and supporting each other with mental health the norm. We are about getting into action, working with rugby clubs and schools to put mental health at the heart of their community."

bravemind.co.uk



NEW MINI SQUAD MEMBER

Wooden Spoon ambassador, Ollie Phillips, welcomed a new addition to the rugby family recently with the birth of his third child, Alfie, this September. Responding to congratulations from a fellow Everest challenger, Ollie agreed that he might be well on his way to creating his own Sevens Team.

ROARING SUCCESS

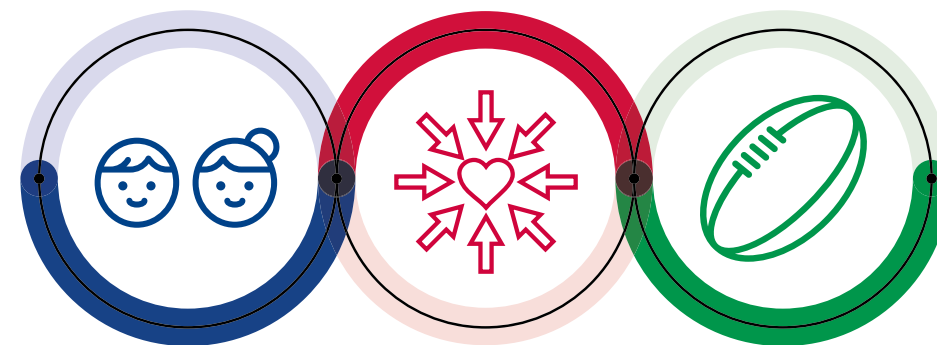
We were delighted to be selected as an official charity partner of the British and Irish Lions this year and to date it has been a great success.

Wooden Spoon CEO, Sarah Webb, said: "We have really enjoyed working with the Lions team. We have reached so many new supporters through the partnership as well as raising funds through merchandise sales. We can't wait to see what is next."

WOODEN SPOON SETS OUT ITS THREE YEAR PLAN

COVID-19 has disrupted the lives of every child in the country. We are facing unprecedented times as a society and the need for our support has grown exponentially over the last year. With this in mind we have published our new three year business strategy.

The strategy sets out three clear priorities:



To raise more funds and help more children and young people

To respond to the evolving need of our beneficiaries and evidence our impact

We will expand our position as a leading voice in rugby

Despite continued uncertainty in the economy as the world circumnavigates itself out of COVID-19, the plan outlines a strong commitment to funding life-changing projects for vulnerable children across the UK and Ireland, while keeping the charity financially stable and building for the future.

Wooden Spoon CEO, Sarah Webb, said: "It has been a challenging time for Wooden Spoon, like most charities. In addition to the impact on the economy, COVID-19 has had a profound impact on society meaning that even more vulnerable children and young people needed our support.

"It fills me with enormous pride that Wooden Spoon has remained strong and has continued to deliver funding and support to life-changing projects supporting our

beneficiaries across the UK and Ireland. Thanks to our loyal supporters, we have been able to deliver over 200 life-changing projects over the last year, at a time of tremendous difficulty for so many people and organisations.

"Camaraderie is at our core and never have we seen this be more evident than during these tough times with the amazing support of the rugby family. We are in a stable position and plan to come back even stronger than ever.

"Our three-year plan gives us focus and aims to unite the staff and volunteers in achieving our mission – to positively transform the lives of children and young people with disabilities or facing disadvantage through the power of the rugby network and connections."

Get in touch today if you would like to be part of our future:
woodenspoon.org.uk/wooden-spoon-sets-out-its-three-year-plan/



25 YEARS OF MEMORIES

After 25 years of the Rugby Annual, we look back at the many memorable rugby highlights and the vast sums raised.



As a rugby broadcaster, writer and former international rugby player, Ian Robertson, pictured above, is uniquely placed as the man behind the annual. This year sees the last one go to print, as Ian turns 77.

This special anniversary edition is a celebration of the last 25 years of rugby, with contributions from Sir Ian McGeechan, Sir Clive Woodward and John Inverdale.

There are memories of Grand Slams for Wales and Ireland and European Cup successes for Bath and Leicester. Among the contributors are Ian's former BBC colleagues Eddie Butler, Alastair Hignell, Miles Harrison, Alastair Eykyn, Andrew Cotter and Chris Jones.

Ian looks back fondly at his time as editor of the book: "We did it mostly at international level, World Cups, Lions Tours, England, Scotland and Wales and the Six Nations Championship. And we'd get rugby

correspondents to write a chapter each. The players always chipped in and wouldn't charge a fee.

"They would be happy to talk to someone for an interview, so you would get the best rugby players of the time. And it was huge fun putting it together. We had companies advertising for us on the jacket cover and inside, and the profit of that went straight to Wooden Spoon.

"And I did an annual dinner every year to launch the book. So, it's been a labour of love and we've had huge respect from the top rugby writers."

Wooden Spoon Rugby World has become an established and eagerly awaited annual publication and one of the few sporting yearbooks to have survived in recent years.

Order your copy from the Wooden Spoon shop <https://iconwu.co.uk/shop/>

FLYING HIGH WITH A NEW PARTNERSHIP

Formed nearly 80 years ago, by a group of enthusiastic golfers involved in the aircraft industry, the Aircraft Golf Society (AGS) still thrives today with over 150 members.

The AGS has hit a birdie for us at Wooden Spoon by choosing our children's charity to be their current charity partner. Their fundraising comes from a number of sources, including golf days, cycle challenges and festive lunches.

Wooden Spoon look forward to making a difference to the lives of children and young people together.

Interested in becoming a member, or playing at one of our events, or wishing to come to our Christmas Luncheon? Please contact Jane via email: jane2ags@outlook.com



LASTING LEGACY

In memory of learning mentor Carole Flynn, Wooden Spoon Warwickshire has made a £7,000 donation to create a sensory garden.

The garden has been built at Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School, part of the Romero Catholic Academy, and opened by Jack Willis who plays for Wasps & England. Carole passed away last year and will be remembered for her inspirational work supporting some of the school's most vulnerable children.

Corpus Christi Principal, Kevin Shakespeare, said the garden is a fitting tribute to Carole: "The sensory garden will be used by the whole school, with a particular focus on our most vulnerable children or those going



through a tough time. That is why we wanted to dedicate this space to Carole.

"She not only loved being outdoors in the sunshine wearing one of her many infamous pairs of sunglasses, but she was truly dedicated to supporting the children and the garden will benefit those children she would have worked with.

"We would like to say a huge thank you to Wooden Spoon for helping us to create a lasting legacy for Carole and we know that the garden is a space she would have loved."

Ian Holroyd, Chairman of Wooden Spoon Warwickshire, added: "It was fantastic to visit the school and officially open the sensory garden and meet the children and staff. It is brilliant that we are able to support schools with projects like this that will make a real difference to the lives of young people."

"The sensory garden will be used by the whole school, with a particular focus on our most vulnerable children or those going through a tough time. That is why we wanted to dedicate this space to Carole."

Kevin Shakespeare

SENSE OF SPACE

This summer, a lively bunch of volunteers picked up power tools and rolled up their sleeves to help with a Fusion Community Initiatives build at The Sheiling Ringwood school.

The goal was to create The Sensory Garden for the school, made possible through a grant of £25,000 provided by Wooden Spoon National office. The Sheiling Ringwood is an independent, residential special school for students aged 6-25 with learning disabilities, including autism and communication difficulties.

It was a mammoth project, led by Fusion Community Initiatives. Fusion brings in the design, expertise, and equipment, while the volunteers step out of their comfort zone, learn new skills and boost team building abilities. The results benefit the local community – a win-win situation.

Katie Francis, Head of Health and Therapies, explains the benefits of the new areas: "The addition of this wonderful sensory garden will greatly enhance our students' ability to be able to regulate their sensory needs."



"The addition of this wonderful sensory garden will greatly enhance our students' ability to be able to regulate their sensory needs." Katie Francis

The garden stimulates the student's senses through sight, sounds, taste, touch and smell, as they use the space.

Katie continued: "Thanks to Wooden Spoon we can help all our pupils explore their environment safely, bringing them a sense of peace and calm."

Could your company benefit from a team building day while making a lasting impact on your local community? If so, get in touch today charity@woodenspoon.org.uk



GROWING IN CONFIDENCE

With the help of a £15,000 grant from Wooden Spoon Leicestershire, the Breathing Space allotment project for the Focus charity has come to life.

The allotment helps young people develop their confidence, resilience, self-esteem and coping strategies as they grow healthy food, engage with the local community and enjoy a slower pace of life away from the pressures of school, social media and the city.

Leicester-based Focus is a young people's charity transforming lives through inspiring and empowering projects that improve local communities.

The allotment was opened in honour of Wooden Spoon Leicestershire's longstanding committee member, Bleddyn Jones, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

Bleddyn was involved with Wooden Spoon for over 20 years and was the unmistakable voice of Leicester Tigers match commentary on BBC Radio.

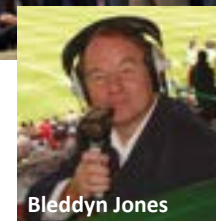
Emily Taylor, Director of Communications

& Partnerships at Focus Charity, said: "Without the support of the Leicestershire & Rutland Wooden Spoon Committee, the creation of this outdoor learning site would not be possible.

"It has given us a space to work with young people away from technology and the constraints of a classroom environment and enabled us to keep giving that much needed face-to-face support through the pandemic to the young people that need it most.

"Projects like this wouldn't be possible without your support so thank you."

"This has enabled us to keep giving that much needed face-to-face support through the pandemic to the young people that need it most." Emily Taylor



Bleddyn Jones





TIME TO HEAL

Dandelion Time helps children, and their families, heal from emotional trauma and abuse. A £26,000 grant from Wooden Spoon Kent enabled them to transform an old stable into a craft studio, which will support more than 125 families a year.

Family case worker, Rachel Rodwell, describes how the craft studio is already helping families: "I've been working a lot with clay this week in the Wooden Spoon craft area.

"I have a child who finds it hard to voice how they feel. They were playing with clay, exploring, with no expectation to create anything. Through describing the sensory properties of the clay, the anxious child became relaxed. The parent and child started laughing together – because it was ridiculously messy.

"We got the potter's wheel out, but we couldn't control the clay. It was an analogy, we said life can be like this too – messy, and

"It's a space within nature, a safe space... it's a little hub where children can explore without getting things wrong, and for children with very low self-esteem, it is wonderful."

Rachel Rodwell



Kent president Mick Skinner, 2nd right, opened the new craft studio with several members of the Kent committee

out of control. I observed the child stopping fighting the clay, he kept his hand still and a pot materialised."

Rachel loves the setting for Dandelion Time: "It's a space within nature, a safe space, it looks beautiful and it's a little hub where children can explore without getting things wrong, and for children with very low self-esteem, it is wonderful.

"It's the animals as well. We had a child who was selectively mute, and yet she started talking to our donkey, whispering to the donkey while she stroked the soft ears.

"A lot of the children that come to us come from trauma backgrounds and families that have experience domestic abuse. Also, we have children with ASD or ADHD, when children are struggling with behaviour sometimes emotional attachment becomes quite difficult.

"During the pandemic, with lockdown, we've seen a big increase in anxiety-based behaviour in children. It's about building relationship and helping the carers and parents."

RUGBY FOR ALL

The aim of the Fylde Rugby Community Foundation is to make playing rugby open to all children, whatever their background.

Sir Bill Beaumont is Honorary President of the foundation, which gives children the opportunity to play rugby who may not have the chance to play at a club or school.

Lainey Gregoire, who founded Streetwise Charity in Warton, has referred underprivileged children to Fylde rugby camps, which are supported by a £12,960 grant from Wooden Spoon Lancashire. Over the past year, she has seen first-hand the difference the holiday rugby clubs have made to children and their families.



Sir Bill Beaumont is Honorary President of the Fylde Rugby Community Foundation

Lainey said: "The places were offered for free, we could pick the children up in taxis, kit them out, if needed, and feed them as well. The children that went on the camp absolutely loved it. They'd never played rugby before and they were good at it. They embraced it totally.

"There were two brothers who were very shy at the start, and they both went on to win player of the day during the camp. Anything like this, where the kids are part of a team, makes them come out of their shell.

"A lot of these families were really struggling, especially during COVID-19, so to take the kids out for a fun day and give them breakfast and lunch is a huge support. Not all families have transport either, so the fact that the Wooden Spoon project was able to collect the children was great."

ABILITY BLUES: REUBEN'S STORY

Reuben attends ABILITY Blues, an inclusive multisport programme and is a great example of why the programme, supported by a £7,000 grant from Wooden Spoon Bedfordshire, is so important.

His father Martin said: "As is the case with many autistic kids, Reuben finds it difficult to join in team sports. The exercise and camaraderie are what Reuben enjoys most.

Reuben is at an age where he is opening up to new experiences and these sessions are great, both in the sporting challenge and their social nature.

"It's lovely to be able to watch him having fun and feeling confident in himself."





COME RAIN OR SHINE



Rugby legend Iwan Tukalo, officially opened a new all-weather training area for Ponies Help Children in North Lanarkshire, to help transform the lives of children and young people in the region.

Wooden Spoon Scotland donated £30,000, so the new facility, run by Heather Stephens and her team, can provide more therapeutic sessions. The ponies have been rescued and carefully matched with the children.

Eleven-year-old Patrick has been going to the centre for around five years, and Patrick's mum Pauline tells us what the therapy ponies have done for them: "We started with one-to-one sessions with his pony, Toots.

"It's about building a relationship with that pony – the pony can sense how you feel.



Toots and Patrick

"If he was really struggling, he would say, 'Can I go and see Toots?' And we could go up for a visit and that would be enough to settle him again."

Pauline, Patrick's mum



Grooming the animals brings a sense of calm to both the children and the ponies

Image credits, three images to left: Dylan Bier

There is this connection on an emotional level with the pony."

Pauline explained: "Patrick finds difficulty with attachments, attention and behaviour. Knowing he can go for an hour a week to Ponies Help Children, and he can self-regulate, is amazing.

"If he was really struggling, he would say, 'Can I go and see Toots?' And we would go up for a visit and that would be enough to settle him again. The ponies help the children learn to be more empathetic, and it is amazing to see how this relationship has grown over the years."

Patrick now helps around the farm, broadening his skills and confidence.

RUNNING FREE



Thanks to research on classification for para sports at Queen Margaret University (QMU), Frame Running is now included in European and World Para Athletics championships and is on the provisional list for the 2024 Paralympics in Paris.

However, access to equipment remains the biggest barrier to bring children into the sport. Together with key partners ACE RaceRunning and RaceRunning Scotland, QMU are looking to establish the first ever Frame Running Equipment Hub, with a £20,000 grant from Wooden Spoon Scotland.

Thomas Kelly, Head of Development & Alumni at QMU, tells us what the new hub will mean to youngsters with little or no mobility: "For example, you have a child with Cerebral Palsy, you place them in a frame, and they can walk. It sounds so simple, but they have never been able to do that. It's incredible when you get to see children use a frame for the first time.

"But then imagine how frustrating it is for a child who has been using that frame for

two years, but has now grown out of it and doesn't have access to the next size up.

"And this is what the hub will provide, almost like a swap shop for the next size frame."

This is not the first project with QMU. In 2018 Lions star Jason White opened the Wooden Spoon Speech Therapy Clinic, which uses ground-breaking technology to change the lives of youngsters with speech difficulties.

FROM BEGINNER TO GOLD

When Gavin Drysdale was five years old he first tried Frame Running at a centre supported by Wooden Spoon. Fourteen years later Gavin won gold at World Para Athletics World Championship, Dubai.



Image courtesy of Scottish Athletics



Columba 1400 helps young people discover their true potential. Wooden Spoon Scotland provided a grant of £7,500 towards a minibus to help transport young people taking part in Columba 1400 activities on the Isle of Skye.

Working alongside young people, Columba 1400 helps them explore their core values and unlock their inner strength, so they can make a difference to their community and transform their sense of identity, their confidence and their ambition.

Marysia tells us what Columba 1400 has done for her: "Before I started my Columba 1400 Leadership Academy, I was terrified. I was shy and always preferred to stay within my comfort zone. I hadn't really been away from home before.

"At the beginning, the sessions were quite stressful as I didn't know my group, but with team building activities, the group bonded slowly. There was anticipation on the minibus going up to Skye. They were so welcoming and warm, with no judgement. I felt safe and secure there.

"There was a lot of talking about our feelings and we all struggled with confidence because of the school and community that we came from. The activities we did on our residential

week on Skye focused on our leadership, and some were quite emotional. Taking part helped me realise who I want to be. A big change was that it stopped me prejudging people. Previously, I got frustrated with those around me that were angry, but I've realised that there are stories behind the behaviours.

"There was anticipation on the minibus going up to Skye. The staff were so welcoming and warm, with no judgement. I felt safe and secure there." *Marysia*

"It's made me think how can I use what I learnt in my daily life and in the future. If I hadn't had this experience, I wouldn't have been able to do some of the amazing things I've done since then including my job as a youth worker in my local community.

"The support of Wooden Spoon and the funding of the new minibus means that many more young people will be able to experience what I did and take part in a Columba 1400 Leadership Academy – thank you to everyone that has made that possible."

VALLEY GARDENS

Four new play areas at Ysgol Hen Felin school were opened by Nigel Owens, Welsh international rugby referee. The project was made possible with the generous support of corporate supporters Admiral Insurance, allowing Wooden Spoon Wales to fund the £30,000 construction.



Welsh international rugby referee Nigel Owens, centre, opened the playground at Ysgol Hen Felin

Ysgol Hen Felin, in Ystrad, Rhondda, is a special school for pupils, aged three to 19 years, with profound, moderate, severe and complex special needs. The new play equipment will enhance pupil's physical and mental development.

Sarah, mum of Thomas, shares what the new play areas have meant to them: "Thomas is 11 years old and has been in Ysgol Hen Felin since he was three. He has been diagnosed with autism, global development delay, hyper-mobility and dyspraxia.



"I was hugely impressed with the incredible love and care the children experience from the dedicated staff at the school and delighted to open the four playgrounds on behalf of Wooden Spoon, which will make a massive difference to their health and well being." *Nigel Owens*

"Thomas has physiotherapy sessions in school to help build core strength. The play structure and gardens have been a key factor with his development, and he has been using them to build on his strength and confidence.

"My three-year-old son, Harrison, is also autistic. He loves the outdoors and so the gardens will be essential for his development over the coming years. We don't have a garden, so for him to be able to access this environment during school is fantastic."



VETS FEST 21 RAISES OVER £64,000



Thirteen regions across the UK came together to create Wooden Spoon's first major national fundraising event since the start of COVID-19. Teams travelled across the country to Bournville Rugby Club in Birmingham for Vets Fest 2021.

Four-hundred-and-fifty players from 15 teams, played in 37 matches at an event organised in memory of 13-year-old rugby fan Olly Stephens, who was tragically killed near his home in Reading in January this year.

Working with Olly's family, the children's charity of rugby raised £64,000 during the weekend. The funds raised from Vets Fest will be donated to regional programmes for disengaged children and young people across the UK and Ireland. By supporting them to make better life choices, the hope is more children and young people are not lost to mindless violence.

Olly's memory was also honoured by presenting the Olly Stephens Memorial Cup to the winning team, Kent, who won the most games and raised the most funds.

Wooden Spoon CEO, Sarah Webb, said: "For us, we're an events-based charity, so we had to stop

everything immediately for the safety of our volunteers up and down the country. I think it's well documented that we're a part of the rugby family, and the family is as strong as ever despite the pandemic. They have waited for us to say 'let's do this' and as soon as we did, we've got something like the Vets Fest going on.

"It's been put together quickly in a short space of time entirely by volunteers, and you can see for yourself what a success it has been today.

"The pandemic has meant we've got a time lag between money raised and money spent, but as we've come out, there's such an abundance of goodwill across the country, meaning we're starting to have events again, and everything is starting to pick up the pace. We are so extremely grateful to all our volunteers and sponsors who made this event happen."

Olly's dad, Stuart, thanked the rugby community and Wooden Spoon for the support it has shown him and his family since the tragedy. Olly was convinced to go to the park by a teenage girl, where he was tragically killed after being stabbed by two boys waiting for him. Stuart, a London Irish fan, decided to work with Wooden Spoon and support the event in memory of his son, who shared his passion for rugby.

"Something like this today has a deeper meaning for us because our whole support structure has come through rugby," said Stuart, speaking at Bournville Rugby Football Club, where Vets Fest 2021 was hosted.

"We're so engaged with the rugby community now because we feel like we had so much out of it, we feel like we need to give something back. If we can help raise awareness of Wooden Spoon, then we will do that.

"Olly was bright, great fun, loyal, compassionate and full of love. Olly was taken from us in the most tragic of circumstances. He left the house to see someone we knew, and never returned home.



The funds will support disengaged youngsters, so more children are not lost to mindless violence

"Olly had autism with suspected Pathological Demand Avoidance, but we loved him for it and it made him special. He could not sense danger or deceit and trusted people too much. He always stood up for the underdog and never backed down from a fight. Sadly it cost him his life."



Stuart Stephens with the Olly Stephens Memorial Cup

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:

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LOCATION ONE

STAX

100% A

Plans for Vets Fest 22 are now underway and will include men's and women's teams. Register your interest at woodenspoon.org.uk/vetsfest22



Remembering Olly: Rugby-mad Olly Stephens was needlessly taken too soon

COLOUR-IN 6 NATIONS TROPHY

A new 6 Nations trophy was made for the 2015 championships, to replace the Five Nations version.

The new trophy was made from over 50 pieces of Sterling silver by Her Majesty's silversmiths, Thomas Lyte.

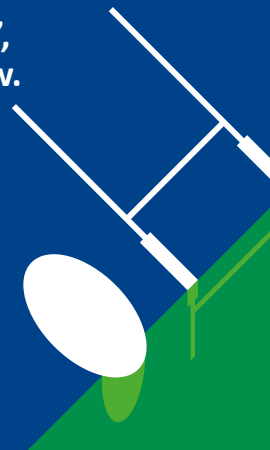
The main part of the trophy has six sides representing the six nations, with each nation's crest engraved on the bottom plinth.

The trophy took over 200 hours to make from 7kg of silver and stands at 75cm high.



Using the letters from the word 'RUGBY', see if you can complete the words below.

R U G B Y
G R R Y
G U B U B Y
R U U B



| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| I D R B T H O Y C F U F | MATCH |
| L X T A C K L E O Y K L | TEAM |
| Q U Y C M R E G T P T Y | SCRUM |
| K B A L L S F D E I H L | POST |
| P R H P T R Y O A T N S | TRY |
| L G R U G B Y P M C T F | RUGBY |
| A P E N A L T Y L H I J | PLAYER |
| Y S F W K Y N T M O S B | BALL |
| E C E P Z L H H A U L D | PITCH |
| R R R O B B O J T S H Y | TACKLE |
| N U E S E T S R C L E P | REFEREE |
| S M E T I W S I H W H K | PENALTY |

LEGO GIVEAWAY!

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As our collaboration with FedEx (and formerly TNT) comes to an end, we would like to say a huge thank you for their support over the last 24 years.

FedEx started fundraising for us in 1998. During that time they have raised more than £4 million and are Wooden Spoon's biggest single benefactor.

In addition to helping Wooden Spoon transport packages across our regions for events, their dedicated colleagues have raised funds by doing Tough Mudders, marathons, wing walking, football events, 10Ks and more.

"We are hugely thankful for the support of FedEx over the last 24 years and while we are sad the collaboration is drawing to a close, the personal friendships that have been forged over this time will continue for years to come."

Sarah Webb, CEO, Wooden Spoon



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ANTHONY'S MOUNTAINOUS CYCLE CHALLENGE

This year Anthony Sutcliffe took on the challenge of riding the Velo29 Tour of Lancashire bike ride.

An awesome 161.2km in distance, with a 2,262m climb – the equivalent of scaling Cumbria's Scafell Pike, Helvellyn and Loughrigg combined.

Thanks to Anthony's commitment and training he not only successfully completed his challenge, but raised an incredible £1,200 for Wooden Spoon.



Would you like to take part in a virtual challenge?
woodenspoon.org.uk/virtual-challenge/

Picture courtesy of Velo29 Endurance Zone

SUMMER SOLSTICE 24-HOUR RAMBLE

And the British and Irish Lions thought they had it tough!

Eight walkers, from England, Scotland, Wales plus Bumble the dog, took on Wooden Spoon's "24/24" challenge – a mile of rambling on the stroke of the hour for a full day and night – creating their own mini Lions squad.

When the darkness and rain arrived with a third of the trek still to go, everyone including the dog, asked: "Can this possibly be worth it?"

Fortified by endless cups of tea, a 3am chilli con carne and the knowledge that £4,500 would be going to an excellent cause, the unanimous answer was "absolutely!"



Summer Solstice team L-R: Sharon Brimble, Deb Rowntree, Chris Hewett, Joe Blackburn, Izzie Thomas, Laura Bucknell, Claire Bundy, Maisie Williams and centre, Bumble the Dog

CANADIAN FUNDRAISER

Former rugby club stalwart and player John Wilmshurst was a big supporter of Wooden Spoon. His daughter Katie explains why she felt compelled to continue to fundraise in his name.

"My dad John was a very proud rugby man. He was very involved in his club in Crowborough.

"We lost my dad to COVID-19 in April 2020. On his first birthday after that, I chose to donate to Wooden Spoon in his name. The charity was something special to him. He loved the idea of rugby, his favourite sport, and being able to help others, children in particular. I've been so fortunate to have a great

team through my fitness business. We have been working out together online."

"When things here slowly opened up, I organised an outdoor workout. Then thought it would be great to be able to use the workout

Katie's fitness fundraiser



as a way to remember my dad. Everyone paid \$20 towards the workout, plus I had other people contribute who couldn't make it!

"I know he would be so proud of me, of all of us. I know my dad would want me to help to continue support the charity that he loved so much."

ROYAL CONNECTIONS

We are mourning the loss of John Nicholl who was one of the founders of the Hertfordshire Region when it split from Chilterns. He brought in members to the new region from Hertford RFC where he played for years, and also from Royston Golf Club, where he ran his own Wooden Spoon golf day. One of his proudest moments was when he met and introduced HRH The Princess Royal at the 25th anniversary celebration.



SAD LOSS FOR WOODEN SPOON

As we went to print we sadly found out about the passing of Bryan Marsh, former trustee and long-time supporter of Wooden Spoon. Bryan became honorary treasurer in 1997, deputy chair of trustees in 1999 and then chair of trustees from 2000 until 2008.

Even after stepping down from his official duties Bryan maintained his support of Wooden Spoon by making regular donations to the Wales region on behalf of the Simon Gibson Charitable Trust. We very much hope to talk about his invaluable contribution to Wooden Spoon more fully in the next issue of Spoonews.



JOHN AND DANNY RAISE THE ROOF

John Inverdale and Danny Care delighted guests with their after-dinner insightful banter at Wooden Spoon Surrey's annual Sportsman's Dinner. More than 150 guests enjoyed a first-class meal at The Royal Automobile Country Club and over £6,000 was raised on the night, which will be spent on life-changing projects in the local area.



SURREY

TASTY EVENT

Bottles Wine Bar hosted a wine tasting event, which raised a fantastic £2,500 for Wooden Spoon Worcestershire. The evening was a great success and finished with a raffle with surprise auction prize.

WORCESTERSHIRE



A DAY TO REMEMBER

To remember club members and supporters lost to the rugby family during the pandemic, Eastern Counties held a Rugby Union Memorial Event. Matches were played for the President's Memorial Cup and a raffle and auction raised over £1,000.



EASTERN COUNTIES

DORSET, WILTSHIRE & HAMPSHIRE



STRONGER TOGETHER

Wooden Spoon Dorset & Wiltshire and Wooden Spoon Hampshire have merged as a new region to create Wooden Spoon Dorset, Wiltshire & Hampshire. Regional Chairman, Brett Bader said: "I am humbled and excited to lead the merger of the two regions with fundraising, events and opportunities to support disadvantaged and disabled children."

CHARITY SCRAMBLE

The Cumbria region mixed it up with a Texas Scramble Golf Day at Lancaster Golf club. Dinner and drinks followed, along with a prize giving to finish the day.



CUMBRIA

Thank you to everyone involved in arranging these events and to all those who contribute so generously to Wooden Spoon

BRISTOL, BATH & SOMERSET



RUGBY GALA MARRIAGE PROPOSAL

September saw Bristol, Bath & Somerset's Gala Black Tie Dinner & Auction, at The University of Bristol, raise over £25,000. Regional Ambassadors Dave Atwood, Harry Thacker Piers Conor, Sarah Bern and Phil de Glanville kept everyone entertained. One supporter bid for a wedding venue and then was proposed to by her partner!

TEeing OFF

Redlibbets Golf Club hosted the 13th Kent Rugby Club Golf Challenge, as 27 teams competed for the Wooden Spoon trophy. Lunch, music and an auction followed, raising a whopping £9,300.



KENT

GOLF MAVERICKS SHOOT TO WIN



SURREY

Wooden Spoon Surrey Honorary President, John Inverdale, congratulates team winners Mike Grieshaber's Mavericks at the Surrey Annual Golf Day at Cuddington Golf Club.

SQUAD UPDATE

Stan Bagshaw has been a member since 1998 and Merseyside chairman since 2011. He is standing down as chair but remaining their honorary president. Stan was the Kit Man for the 1997 'Living with the Lions' Tour and has been an integral factor in why so many from that tour still support Wooden Spoon. Thank you Stan.



MERSEYSIDE

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ED JACKSON: FROM TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH

Rugby player turned mountaineer Ed Jackson came to Wooden Spoon in 2019 and gave an inspirational talk to our Everest challengers a few months before they embarked on their world record breaking challenge.

In his new book, *Lucky*, Ed tells the story of how, at just 28 years old, he was told he would never walk again. After a miscalculated dive into a pool, he suffered multiple cardiac arrests, a broken neck and a partially severed spinal cord.

A professional rugby union player, Ed played for a number of teams in England and Wales. He had also represented England and captained both U16 and U18 teams.

Lying paralysed in intensive care, the rugby player knew his life would never be the same as his career was cut short. But he wasn't ready to give up hope.

Driven by relentless determination, Ed began to regain movement in his fingers and toes. Defying the expectations of even the most optimistic doctors, step by step, Ed began to walk again.

Fuelled by a renewed appreciation for life and a drive to help others suffering similar injuries to his own, Ed set his sights on a new challenge; mountaineering. Embarking on a gruelling climb to raise funds for a spinal unit in Kathmandu, Ed realised that the odds were stacked against him.

Lucky is the story of how Ed faced the impossible when it seemed all hope was lost, and shows how you too, can overcome the biggest challenges that life sends your way.



"Wooden Spoon make a real difference in an area that I'm passionate about so it's been a real pleasure to support their fantastic work over the last couple of years." Ed Jackson

WINNING WEEKEND FOR WOODEN SPOON MARAUDERS



In July, Wooden Spoon Marauders played the third leg of the Super 7s Series at Nottingham Rugby Club in searing heat.

The Wooden Spoon Marauders Women started the day well beating Samaurai 29-28, the first time they had won their opening fixture against their old foes.

The next game was against the British Army and the Marauders quickly moved into an early lead and were three tries up at half time. Unfortunately, the Marauders let the Army back into the game, conceding tries that would cost them later. Nevertheless, the Wooden Spoon Marauders Women finished the game worthy winners 29-14.

The final group game was played in front of a large crowd against Jesters. The Marauders were confident but unfortunately lost the game 10-42.

With each of the top three sides now losing one game, the Cup Final was determined by points difference and the tries conceded. The Trophy final saw a re-match against the Army,

which the Marauders won 28-26, showing their determination not to allow the mistakes of the previous games to be repeated.

The Wooden Spoon Marauders Men started more slowly, having quite a tough day losing to Assassins 12-31 and Jesters 12-29 in the first two games. They then rallied coming from behind to win a well fought contest 24-19 gaining a bye into the semi-final to play Wailers.

After a great start the team raced ahead with two tries and despite going into the second half with a comfortable lead, they let the Wailers back in with an early try allowing them to build confidence and score to win the match 14-29 and knock the Marauders Men out of the competition.

Thank you to Wooden Spoon Marauders' kit provider O'Neills and kit sponsors Irwin Mitchell.

If you would like to participate in the men's or women's 7s rugby squads, please email rugby@woodenspoon.org.uk

AS SEEN ON



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EVENTS: RUGBY TOTS

TRY-ATHLON KICK OFF

This October, 30 cyclists took on a gruelling challenge, stretching for 200km through the Lake District and North Pennines to the ancient fringes of Hadrian's Wall, before reaching the North Sea at Whitley Bay – all in aid of Wooden Spoon.

The Coast 2 Coast Challenge from Whitehaven to Whitley Bay, which raised around £50,000, kick-started the Rubytots Try-athlon fundraiser.

Rugbytots runs fun rugby classes for children, and is aiming to raise funds for Wooden Spoon by sponsoring a child to score as many tries, kick as many goals and catch as many passes as possible in five-minute sets.

Rugbytots has been involved with Wooden Spoon since 2014 and has supported many projects including an adventure playground at St Joseph's School, Surrey; a playground at Kobi Nazrul School, London; an adventure trail at Mayfield School, Devon and a woodland walk at Calthorpe Academy, Birmingham.

Find out more at rugbytots.co.uk/TryAthlon



"Rugbytots and Wooden Spoon have had a long term partnership and we are thrilled with the appetite and take up from the franchisees and parents this year following the pandemic."

Max Webb

Reaching the finish line after a 200km cycle



#helpingkidsthroughrugby



More than thirty brave runners took their place at October's London Marathon for Wooden Spoon, raising funds to change children's lives.

We can't thank them enough, along with every single person who donated and supported them. Here are a few of their stories...

A MARATHON EFFORT



Gill and Simon Wright

"The marathon was as tough as I imagined it would be, both mentally and physically. I chose to support Wooden Spoon having had first-hand experience of the amazing work they do to support disabled and disadvantaged children in the UK and Ireland."

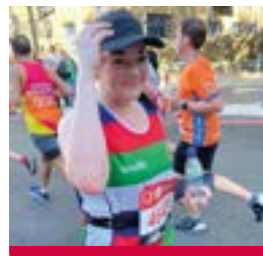
James Howard

"I wanted to support Wooden Spoon as I have been playing rugby since a young age and wanted to give something back to help others enjoy it too. I have two young boys and the thought of doing something to help other children inspired me."



Jon Pinchbeck (centre)

"I was part of the FEDEX team that ran London for Wooden Spoon. I've been lucky enough to be able to do it for the last three years now and really love the work that you guys do. I ran with Iggy Mesias (left) and Lee Nicholls (right). I know for sure that the three of us want to continue to raise money for Wooden Spoon in the future."



Cara Gourlay

"It was an amazing day! Can't believe I managed to do it. I chose to support Wooden Spoon because of all the incredible things they do for disadvantaged and disabled children, by not only providing help and opportunities, but also promoting inclusivity, which is so important."



James Hobson

"The atmosphere and crowds were unbelievable. I absolutely loved my first marathon and it has spurred me on to compete again. Wooden Spoon is an amazing charity. Having a disabled brother, I have seen the real benefits of what they want to achieve and the positive impact on children's lives."

Andy Daly

"It was a very joyful event, with so much support and encouragement from the thousands of people who turned out to watch and fellow competitors who spurred one another on. I hope the funds raised will go some way to supporting this really great cause. Thank you to everyone who has supported the Wooden Spoon charity."



Cameron Byrne and Alex Brown

"We chose to support Wooden Spoon in memory of our friend Hux who was a massive rugby fan and player. His family chose to support Wooden Spoon after he passed away and are very involved with Wooden Spoon in Cornwall, so we thought it was a fitting tribute to run in his memory while raising money for a good cause."



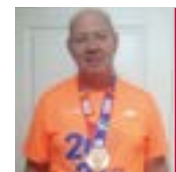
Stuart Hiscocks

"One of the best experiences of my life – the atmosphere, hearing your name being cheered and my family all supporting me. My parents have been long-term supporters of Wooden Spoon, my dad is a big rugby fan and my son plays for Bracknell RFC."



Nev Moule

"My favourite part was seeing my family at Cutty Sark and also all the support you receive from the crowd. As an active rugby player and referee, it was a no-brainer for me to run for a rugby-based charity."





4 NOVEMBER 2021 SOLD OUT

Scotland

Edinburgh Annual Dinner

11 NOVEMBER 2021

Worcestershire

Annual Race Night

12 NOVEMBER 2021

Lancashire

Annual Luncheon

12 NOVEMBER 2021

Wales

The Concrete Society Autumn Lunch

17 NOVEMBER 2021

Devon

An Evening with Phil Serrell

18 NOVEMBER 2021

Gloucestershire

Annual Dinner

19 NOVEMBER 2021

Surrey

Rugby Clubs' Curry Lunch

19 NOVEMBER 2021

Manchester & Cheshire

Curry Lunch

25 NOVEMBER 2021

Eastern Counties

Norwich RFC Sportsman's supper

26 NOVEMBER 2021

Merseyside

Annual Sporting Lunch

2 DECEMBER 2021

Devon

The Exeter Chiefs Foundation & Wooden Spoon Devon's Annual Christmas Lunch

3 DECEMBER 2021

Warwickshire

Christmas Lunch

5 DECEMBER 2021

National

The Grim Challenge, Ultimate Challenge – The event is full, but volunteers needed for the day

8 DECEMBER 2021

Sussex

Fish and Chips on Brighton Pier

12 DECEMBER 2021

Chilterns

Chilterns Carol Cruise, Henley-On-Thames

17 DECEMBER 2021

Yorkshire

Christmas Sporting Lunch, Leeds

28 JANUARY 2022

Kent

Six Nations Dinner

24 MARCH 2022

Surrey

Sportsman's Dinner

28 APRIL 2022

Durham

Annual Golf Day

10 JUNE 2022

Surrey

Annual Golf Day

* Please note that all events will run in conjunction with Government guidelines and may be subject to change.



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Wooden Spoon
The children's charity of rugby

FESTIVE FUNDRAISING

Get your festive fundraising hat on this season and raise vital funds for vulnerable children and young people who need our help.



ORGANISE A CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Set a date for a Christmas jumper day at your work and ask everyone to make a small donation to take part. You could also hold a competition for the best... or worst jumper!

PURCHASE OUR CHRISTMAS CARDS

Sending one of our Christmas cards is a great way to show you care whilst also helping to raise life-changing funds. See our range of cards at: iconwu.co.uk/shop



SECRET SANTA

Instead of spending £10 on a Secret Santa present, ask your colleagues to set the limit at £8 and have everyone donate that extra £2 to Wooden Spoon.

HOST A CHRISTMAS BAKE OFF

Get friends, family or colleagues to bake their favourite festive treats and crown the winner. Dish out your treats at work or school and raise some much-kneaded dough!

