



Issue 50
Winter 2010



Speen and North Dean News



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Now that we are into our second half
century of SNDN issues we are on the
lookout for new, enthusiastic, volunteers
with a publishing bent to join our small
team bringing community news and events
to our villagers.

Anne and David Worlock now wish to
stand down as editors. We much appreciate
their considerable efforts with editing the
recent issues and hope they will
continue to contribute with articles of
village interest.

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What's on in Speen and North Dean, 2011

Month	Event	Where	Contact
January 2011			
Thursday 6 th	WI. Member's evening	Speen Village Hall, 7.45 pm	Barbara Collett 488348
Wednesday 12 th	Men's Phil Society	Black Horse, L Green, 8.30pm	Graham Peart 488327
Sunday 16 th	Andy/Carolyn Farewell	Chapel, 10.15 am	James Entwisle 488875
Wednesday 26 th	Speen Lunch Club	KW4, 12 noon	Gloria Holmes 488420
February			
Wednesday 2 nd	MPS supper/speaker	KW4, 7.00 pm. Book in.	Graham Peart 488327
Thursday 3 rd	WI. Round the World	Speen Village Hall, 7.45 pm	Barbara Collett 488348
Friday 4 th	Race Night	North Dean Village Hall	Jez Wickes 07802 476712
Wednesday 16 th	Playing Fields AGM	SPF Pavilion, 8.00 pm	Kay Knight 488335
Wednesday 23 rd	Speen Lunch Club	KW4, 12 noon	Gloria Holmes 488420
March			
Wednesday 2 nd	MPS	George, W Wycombe, 8.30pm	Graham Peart 488327
Thursday 3 rd	WI. Pilates	Speen Village Hall, 7.45 pm	Barbara Collett 488348
Wednesday 16 th	Wine Tasting	North Dean Village Hall	Judith Broadley 563178
Wednesday 23 rd	Speen Lunch Club	KW4, 12 noon	Gloria Holmes 488420
April			
Wednesday 6 th	MPS	Hampden Arms, 8.30pm	Graham Peart 488327
Thursday 7 th	WI. Talking Hats	Speen Village Hall, 7.45 pm	Barbara Collett 488348
Wednesday 13 th	Village Hall AGM	North Dean Village Hall	Julie White 562311
Friday 29 th	Party, Royal Wedding	TBC	
May			
Wednesday 4 th	MPS	Plough, Cadsden, 8.30pm	Graham Peart 488327
Thursday 5 th	WI. Resolutions	Speen Village Hall, 7.45 pm	Barbara Collett 488348
Thursday 12 th	Speen v N Dean golf	Mentmore GC	Charlie Pearson
June			
Wednesday 1 st	MPS	Archery/King William, 6.30pm	Graham Peart 488327
Thursday 2 nd	WI. Thalidomide	Speen Village Hall, 7.45 pm	Barbara Collett 488348
Friday/Sat 10/11 th	Speen Fundays	Speen Playing Field	Andy Thompson 488524
Sunday 19 th	Breakfast on the Hill	Field at Lower North Dean (TBC)	Andrew Howard 562775
Saturday 25 th	PTA Ball	Speen School	
Later			
July 9 th	Speen Fete	Speen Playing Field	Amanda Dobbs 488887
July 30 th	North Dean Fete	North Dean Hall Playing Field	Julie White 562311
September 8-18 th	Speen Festival		Sue Taylor 488168

Dear Reader

A warm welcome to issue 50. Since we generally publish three each year, this means that we approach our seventeenth year. Thanks to many efforts and volunteers, the support of our advertisers in tough times, various sponsors (including Hughenden Parish Council and Speen Fete), and all of our readers, we continue to flourish and develop ways in which we can be pro-active as well as a source of report on village activities. And all of our efforts are co-ordinated by our management group, chaired by Gloria Holmes. She is our link to the past as well as our driving force in the present, since she was the one who suggested the idea of this publication to its first editor as well as the person who made sure that it reached everyone in the villages and did not make unsustainable losses. Today we distribute to over 400 houses in the area, maintain a presence online as well as in print, and aim always to break even. We are always keen to engage with new talent, so if you have recently moved here, or now have a little more time on your hands, please contact Gloria or the Editors (phone numbers in Who's Who in Speen and North Dean, page 30).

In this issue, while reporting on a very busy summer in Speen, we also begin to look forward to next year. Late night meetings around the villages indicate that 2011 is a Festival year. A draft plan is already in hand, but do not think that there are no slots left for good ideas, since the opposite is the truth. Involving more local people interested in using their talents - or finding out about talents they never thought they had - lies at the heart of this Festival's thinking. Look at the report on page 25 and get stuck in, since the



strength of the Festival lies in the involvement of as many of us as possible as spectators, participants, parents of participants or all three. The involvement of more young people in the village remains a key concern, so please talk to the Directors (Kate and Sam Laughton) or the Festival Chairman, Jem Symondson, if you think you can help or know people who should be involved - or simply have a good idea for an event or activity.

In issue 49 we published the first map in what we hoped would be a series of such features. This was the Village Heritage Map, which has an existence almost as long as this journal, and which we reprinted in its current form. We would still like to improve it and republish it, and make it available for visitors and residents in the Pub and the Village Shop. And in this issue we publish a second map, courtesy of John Oliver. However, we still face the problem that we have more ideas for maps than people to execute them. Once again, we need help. Di Rainbow has contributed a delightfully illustrated children's walk which will appear in the next issue.

This issue also includes an update on HS2. This issue has not gone away with the change of government, though many in these parts will have thought of offering it up as a voluntary cut. "Protect our children, welfare dependents and pensioners and we offer you a high speed train line in compensation, which you can advertise everywhere as an example of what you have courageously not accomplished in the interests of balancing the budget and repaying the debt incurred by the people who thought up the idea of the train to begin with." Sadly this sort of logic has no political credibility, but because the issue has gone quiet amidst the

clamour of other issues does not mean it has gone away. We must be vigilant, and prepared to move quickly.

Finally, an issue close to our hearts as editors. Fred Burnham's departure from the village does not mean that we have lost him entirely (he has moved into sheltered housing in Wycombe) but it does place at one remove a contributor whose occupancy of the old Weavers Cottage in the heart of the community and whose passion for wild flowers and nature conservancy were emblematic of many of the qualities that we all treasure in a place like this. Fred's contributions to this journal include a long-running sequence on the discovery and preservation of local orchids, so, with the help and permission of David Hill, we have obtained a painting of the Ghost Orchid, one of Fred's favourite discoveries, and had it placed on the wall of the dining room in the King William IV to be joined a copy of Fred's original article. This was unveiled on 2 December as a thank-you to Fred for his long-running communications - and in the hope of some more.

This issue also marks the end of our two year term as editors. It is a wonderful privilege to produce the Speen and North Dean News, and we are grateful for both brickbats and bouquets. We both still have demanding commitments to family both here and in Canada. We also are keeping fulltime workloads, in spite of our pensionable ages, as independent consultants and we know the villages need fresh faces at the helm. So when Gloria calls, heed her. It is the opportunity of a lifetime!

Anne and David Worlock
anne@monimail.net
david@davidworlock.com

Political consensus on HS2 beginning to show cracks

The Editors were pleased to note in the Guardian on 11th December a report by Dan Milmo. Shadow Transport Secretary, Maria Eagle, has said that Labour will be reviewing its support for HS2. The paper quotes her as saying "... we rightly start with a blank sheet of paper - that doesn't have a high speed line already running through it". It is clear that HS2 Action Alliance is having an impact on the thinking around the economic case for the rail line.

Recent developments have included John Redwood making a strong statement on his website - a Conservative MP who lives nowhere near the line of route, and the increasing cracks in the Coalition

Government. If the Lib Dems can change their mind on Tuition Fees, now is the time to get them to change their mind on High Speed Rail!

The Editors

Letters to the Editor

To the Villagers of Speen

I had to write to thank you all for the kindness and support you have shown me and my family over the past few months. When Fred and I moved here 13 years ago, little did we know the welcome we would receive and how many fantastic friends we would make. It is a huge comfort to know you are here.

With love,

Daphne Westray

Letter from North Dean's Retiring Postman, Mick Druce. Mick had been postman in North Dean for over 10 years; he retired in early summer 2010. The village held a collection for Mick and made a presentation to him at the North Dean fete.

This is Mick's response:

To all the residents of North Dean

I would like to thank you very much for a really good day on the 31st July. The fete had a really good feeling and my wife and grandchildren really enjoyed it.

It was nice to meet you all when not in 'work mode' and the meal and company in the evening finished the day off nicely. Again thank you for everything.

Yours

Mick the Postie



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Speen Village Fete surpasses all earnings . . .

After what was a terrific day in July, the count up began. A lot of praise has to go to all who ran events and helped with the organisation and not forgetting those who turned up on the day to enjoy the event. I think this year was special as the main charity, The Thomas Ball Children's Cancer Fund, was not only supported by us but also the RAF team that flew in the helicopter, a great joint effort.

It was equally special that so many turned out for the presentation of cheques in August at the KWIV. Thanks go to the KW for their support and Amanda, our fete chairman, for getting it all together. As we had hoped

profits were up this year enabling a staggering £1,500 to go to the Thomas Ball Charity and £300 to each of the village organisations.

Thomas's mum was on hand to receive the cheque from David and Amanda and as you can see from the photograph she was absolutely delighted. She said in response that, "the money will go a long way in

supporting the main objective of the Charity in relieving sickness and distress among children suffering from cancer."

If you would like to find out more then you can do this by logging on to www.thomasball.org.uk or calling 01494 890157.

*Paul Rogerson
Speen Village Fair Treasurer*



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The Ridgeway – Walk 2
– late September 2010

The second leg of our epic walk begins at the Wiltshire/Oxfordshire borders on the outskirts of the little village of Ashbury. It's a warm, perfectly still, late summer day - ideal conditions for the walk ahead. Armed with a full picnic and our faithful, excited puppy Buster, we set off



Wayland's Smithy

on what will become a circular walk, with the outgoing stretch along the Ridgeway to our destination of White Horse Hill at Uffington and the return journey via footpaths and pretty outlying villages. This is a beautiful part of the Ridgeway which includes a stretch which I had previously walked and enjoyed several years ago with my late son Anthony.

My first sensory observation is that of sound. A combination of agricultural machinery - ploughing the wide open expanses of dry and dusty fields - mixed with the gentle late summer song of the skylark. My second sensory observation is that of sight, as I notice the abundance of berries in all colours and sizes. The elderberry bush with its branches hanging



*Tony and Buster at
Uffington Castle hill fort*

low under the weight of the clusters of dark black, over-ripe fruit; the deep red of the shiny hawthorn berries and the orange of the rose hips which look as if they will explode from their swollen pods. It is then that my third sensory observation is engaged - that of smell. All around are fallen, half decaying apples, which fill the air with a strong scent of cider. A momentary desire for a long, cool glass of the refreshing beverage soon passes as I remember my flask of tea in the rucksack. There are so many different kinds of apples, which we were very pleased to sample. Yum. (See cover photo.)

The journey to our first pit stop is approximately four miles and the landscape along this part is predominantly wide open expanses of agricultural land. It felt like there was endless open sky all around us with far reaching, stunning views in every direction. We decide to take a slight detour off the track, down to Wayland's Smithy (a Neolithic, chambered long barrow, apparently created 5,000 years ago) to stop for a well-earned cuppa and snack. We perched ourselves on top of the burial chamber - strange you may think, but it was most



White Horse Hill

comfortable. It was all a bit unsettling, therefore, when Buster started growling at something (unseen to us) which caused his hackles to rise. We duly paid our respects to the departed and made off towards White Horse Hill.



Lynchets

Several miles later, we reached the ramparts of Uffington Castle hill fort, where I felt as if we were on top of the world, with the most amazing 360 degree views - simply



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breathhtaking. With just a gentle breeze, the warmth of the sunshine caressing my face and birdsong all around, it was just the most perfect place to be on a late summer day.

Just a short walk further on and we were at our destination - White Horse Hill, Uffington. By this time, we were all ready for a rest and 'refuelling' so we sat ourselves down on the sloping banks of the hill, with the White Horse in our view. It was here that I had a quiet moment of reflection as I remembered the last time I was here with Anthony - on a similar late summer, sunny day - bitter sweet memories . . . a fitting place to be, on this the second anniversary of his passing.

So, with 6.5 miles of the Ridgeway covered, we decided to plan our return journey and, as neither of us like backtracking, we decided to navigate our way back through the surrounding villages using countryside footpaths. It seemed like a good idea at the time, however, the footpaths

were not always as clearly marked as we would have hoped and we often found ourselves 'off track'. Buster was in heaven when he flushed up a hare (almost the same size as him) and gave a brave chase. Needless to say, the hare won. Wildlife was the name of the 'game' on the final leg - pheasants, deer and partridge all showing their faces to our very excited little puppy.

The countryside was quite different once we were away from the Ridgeway path, with side valleys and lush hollows all around. We came across a phenomenon previously unencountered by us, known as strip lynchets. They are cultivation terraces on steep hillsides, apparently created and used in medieval times - quite bizarre to look at, but

beautiful none-the-less.

With several picturesque villages behind us, we were very pleased to return to our car - some seven hours after we had left it this morning - having covered 12.5 miles. Shattered is the word which springs to mind! However, we were very pleased with ourselves, but even more pleased that, at last, our little puppy has developed enough strength and stamina to keep up with his owners.

Julie White

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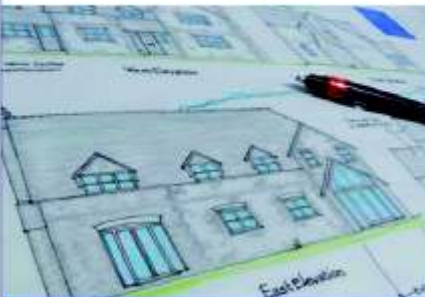
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I walk and I look – a profile of Fred Burnham, nature conservationist and son of Wycombe

Rooted in the soil

The Speen and North Dean News' wildflower editor, Fred Burnham, turned 75 this year and moved from Spinners and Weavers Cottage, to High Wycombe to be closer to his family. His new home gives him access to the Rye and the Water Meadows, a splendid space to walk, for one who said in a recent interview "Even if my health isn't what it was, I can walk and I can look". His walking and looking have given us many engaging columns about the wild flora in our part of the world. We are pleased that he is going to continue, from the, as he recently described it, "edge of the Chilterns".

Fred's looking is a particular kind of looking, sometimes on his knees and often with a magnifying glass, absorbing the detail of a wildflower and its surroundings, wondering if perhaps it is rare or alien, or even, like the purple toothwort (see last issue) believed to have been extinct in the County. There is a passion and intensity in the looking that is infectious. Yet Fred was a town bred boy, born in High Wycombe in 1935, the eighth of 10 children. His father had been in the navy for 25 years and fought in the Battle of Jutland in the First World War. They tried to get him to go back

in the navy when the Second World War broke out, but Fred thinks "he'd had a bellyful of warring". There was nothing Fred's father couldn't turn his hand to and he worked at anything from making and selling clothes, to becoming a specialist in the moulding and forming of latex cushions for Ercol and for cinemas. Fred remembers his mother as a brilliant cook, and a "baby machine. There were some families that had 14 children. It's a good thing that women don't have to have a life like that anymore." Her eldest child, a boy, was knocked down by a car when he was only two.

Fred's father gave them "a good countryside education". Their house in Hatters Lane had a big garden with fruit trees, apples and pears, which were stored every year wrapped in tissue paper. Nothing was ever thrown away. Fred's mother put up pickled onions and made chutneys. Bread that had gone stale was soaked in milk, and turned into bread pudding, with currants chopped up and added to the mix. Monday was washing day, with no washing machine, but a great copper full of steaming hot water, and a lot of back-breaking scrubbing, before the clothes were hung up to dry. Clothes weren't thrown away either. "They were always handed down, and that was awful", said Fred, who as the eighth of ten children, remarked ruefully, "and they were already patched, by the time I got them." But Mondays also meant bubble and squeak day, made from the leftovers of the Sunday dinner and cooked on the Primus stove.

Even the war brought him close to the countryside, although they



Fred Burnham

could see the fighters in dog fights in the skies above Wycombe and the searchlights from London. "We were all involved with the local farmers. All our spare time was out on the fields." They put everything into cultivation, even if it wasn't very good. The farmer on whose farm Fred worked still used horse drawn ploughs and carts, and had "a bit of a problem. His wife and son used to go down to the pub to rescue what they could of the day's takings". But in those days "the fields were full of flowers. Corn cockle, common when I was a boy, is now extinct here. There were lots of birds and butterflies."

Finding the tools of the trade

It seems that the wartime need for workers in the fields could pre-empt more formal schooling which, for Fred in any event, was affected by ill health. It meant he started school quite late. Although, as he remarked, he was allowed to run around at home, so he isn't sure what the school prohibition was about. But he also suggests that reading didn't come easily for him until

he was in his early teens. And then he began to read everything he could with a dictionary beside him. He read every night. His involvement with the Buckinghamshire Rare Plants Recording Group in recent years (<http://sites.google.com/site/bucksplantrecorders/>) has opened up a whole new view on history for him. No plant can be claimed as rare if it is also alien - that is a recent arrival after the 16th century! So tracking down the histories of these plants' travels from around the world and around the country has provided huge stimulation for Fred's curious mind.

For many years he gave his Sundays as a volunteer warden in a number of estates, including Chequers, and other wildlife trusts. He became a specialist in "destructive conservation". That is a form of conservation which returned sites to the state in which wildflowers thrive, not the scrub and woodland that spring up after the grazing animals have gone, but the open fields that covered rural England before the changes of the past 50 years.

But Fred was not himself a lily of the field neither toiling nor spinning. On the contrary, in the tradition of his father, he has worked hard all his life. After National Service, he wanted to be an electrician. "Almost 40 farms had gone and Wycombe was just one big building site." But in the end he apprenticed with Whites Builders as painter and decorator, a craft that eventually brought him to Speen. Where, Don White, whose family owned White's is

also a prominent citizen.

Coming to Speen

This is not the only example of what the Editors call "the Speen Effect", a phenomenon of connection, where our small community appears to have connections all around the world. Fred, by virtue of connecting from one family to another (what today would undoubtedly be called networking), found himself meeting another decorator, who also happened to be the then minister of the Chapel, Charlie Radburn, whose wife Rachel was the founder, with Gloria Holmes, of the Speen and North Dean News, 50 issues ago. It was also through the Radburns that Fred found a home when he needed one, as a carer for Joyce Coleman in Spinners and Weavers Cottage - and when Joyce needed someone to make it possible for her to continue living independently. Fred discovered to his surprise that Joyce had had a boarder for a number of years, Anne Burnham, his sister in law! He hadn't realised the connection until much later.

Relationships – people and places

Among Fred's relationships have been many that have enriched his pleasure in life, even through the difficult phases of job redundancy and illness. His father holds a special place in Fred's heart. Those of us who walked down Studridge Lane of an evening when Fred had his music playing, would often stand and listen with pleasure to the playlist of jazz and classical music! It was Fred's father who gathered the family every

Saturday into the sitting room ("That was usually only for guests"). He played a recording of an opera, for instance, telling everyone the story behind the music and then playing it again so they could just listen and take it in. Fred recalls The Flying Dutchman in particular.

Of his many siblings, it is Dennis who shares with him the naturalist streak. You will recall from the last issue that it was with Dennis that he discovered the Purple Toothwort. He shared music with brother David in a skiffle band. Fred played the guitar and David the bass - a taut string on the tea chest. "He was good, too."

And, there is Fred's son, Andy, of whom he is so proud, and pleased to be close to in his new home. Like so many of us, Fred had a happy marriage that sadly went wrong. But he and his wife had been caring for a child who Fred went to great lengths to adopt, and raise on his own, even appearing in court to establish his right to do so.

For the better part of thirty years Fred has lived in Speen where "I have many good friends". Now he has moved back to High Wycombe, where his life began, and finds himself happily within range of the open fields still accessible to him. We'll miss him, but it is a pleasure to think of him in his comfortable flat, near family and making new friends with his neighbours.

The Editors

Down on the Farm

New tech and good old fashioned manure

The farm confronts regulation, drought and hopeful thoughts of spring

The rain that we prayed for duly arrived in August and with it the associated problems of too much wet. Many of you will have been aware of several 'smelly' days when we were forced to spread slurry (liquid manure) in unsuitable conditions in order to meet the autumn deadline, after which we are not allowed to dispose of slurry on the land for a couple of months. Recently the dry conditions have been ideal for the operation which only goes to show how stupid it is for bureaucrats in offices to make rules when conditions on the ground vary widely across the country. No doubt many of you have ridiculous regulations in your own businesses; let's hope the coalition government really do manage to tear up some of the mountains of paperwork and regulations.

Our building work at Home Farm is nearly completed and the new bigger milking parlour will be in use before the end of the month. Instead of standing in the rain waiting to be milked, the cows will have a covered collecting yard and 40 of them will be in the parlour at any one time. The new parlour represents our move into the high tech age, with the cows all identified electronically as they enter. They can then be fed

individually and segregated as the herdsman wishes according to the management needs of the cow at that time, all pre-programmed into the computer. The system is now well proven so we are not being guinea pigs - nonetheless we have our fingers crossed for the successful working of all the parts! We have installed a viewing window so that we are able to explain the system to anyone who is interested.

The hedge fund boys have entered the commodity market and are playing around with wheat. Very poor harvests in Russia, leading to an export ban of Russian grain, and increased demand in China, have inflated the price, hence you are having to pay more for your loaf of bread; far more, I would add, than is justified, I read that Tesco is disputing a price rise with Hovis and consequently 12 lines of Hovis have disappeared from their shelves! As net users of wheat we are not celebrating!! Many livestock farmers use wheat in animal rations but the price of beef has fallen recently and milk prices are still below the true cost of production (whilst the

supermarket margin is 11p/litre and the processor margin 5p/litre).

With the wet and cold weather arriving the milking cows are now in the barns on dry warm beds. As always the tiny calves are pampered inside, but the older ones will graze outside until the grass has all been eaten. If we leave the grass too long the lush leaves die in hard frosts, fall over and then rot, killing the base of the plant. You may well see someone else's sheep (called "keepers") in our fields, helping with this tidying up exercise which should leave us with plenty of fresh growth in the Spring.

Gill Kent
gk@bfarms.co.uk



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A Fete to Remember North Dean 2010

After a wet and wild fete in 2009, a warm sunny morning was a welcome start to the 2010 North Dean Fete day.

After months of organising and a very busy few days before Fete day, everything was set for the 2pm traditional opening time.

The fete was opened by David Lidington, MP. With recent constituency boundary changes, North Dean was a new addition for Mr Lidington and it was great for everyone to have a chance to meet their new MP. Also part of the opening ceremony was the acknowledgement of our retiring postman Mick Druce. Mick had been looking after the post in North Dean for over 10 years and the village took the opportunity to thank him for all his hard work.

After the opening, the famous North Dean Bric-a-brac opened in its new location. It really is a chance for people to rummage for that potentially one off golden nugget.

The fete relies on villagers to run the many stalls. Golf, shooting, competitions, raffles, running games. There are also other stalls such as bouncy castles, a demolition zone (good to have something new !) , race cars and a brilliant South African BBQ. A special mention also to the Piggott's band, a traditional part of the fete and Dave King for keeping everyone on time



A big thank you to everyone who helped deliver a great fete in 2010 – see you next year.

North Dean Fete has always been a traditional village Fete, organised by a group of villagers for the village. It is a celebration of what is great about the village and the people who live there. A certain type of person is needed to organise and run these events, a person who will always put themselves out for others and through strength of character and diplomacy ensure everyone's point is heard. Doug Wilson was the best example of this type of person and supported North Dean and many other organisations. Doug will be missed by everyone.

Andrew Howard
Chairman
NDVH

See page 20 for North Dean Fete
Competition Winners

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SPEEN VILLAGE WALK – in Aid of the Village Hall Fund

On Sunday 17 October 2010, the Speen Village Hall Committee organised a Village Walk. The planned route - as shown opposite - incorporated mixed terrain, some gentle changes of gradient and a meandering return through Monkton Wood.



Seventeen stalwarts and one black Labrador named "Beetle" completed all or part of the route in 1 hour 40 minutes. There was some dawdling too! Having been

promised the delights of a very large, swampy pond on the path alongside Grim's Ditch, the two youngest Podmores could not get there soon enough. Anticipation was rewarded with a very muddy paddle.

To complete the experience, the Village Hall Committee had prepared to 'feed the five thousand', so with the disappointingly low turnout, an excess of

delicious cake consumption followed.

Those who did not support the Village Hall at this event missed a walk in the best autumnal conditions the Chilterns can offer.

£140 was raised towards the cost of a new floor in the kitchen and some repairs to the roof.

John Oliver
488409



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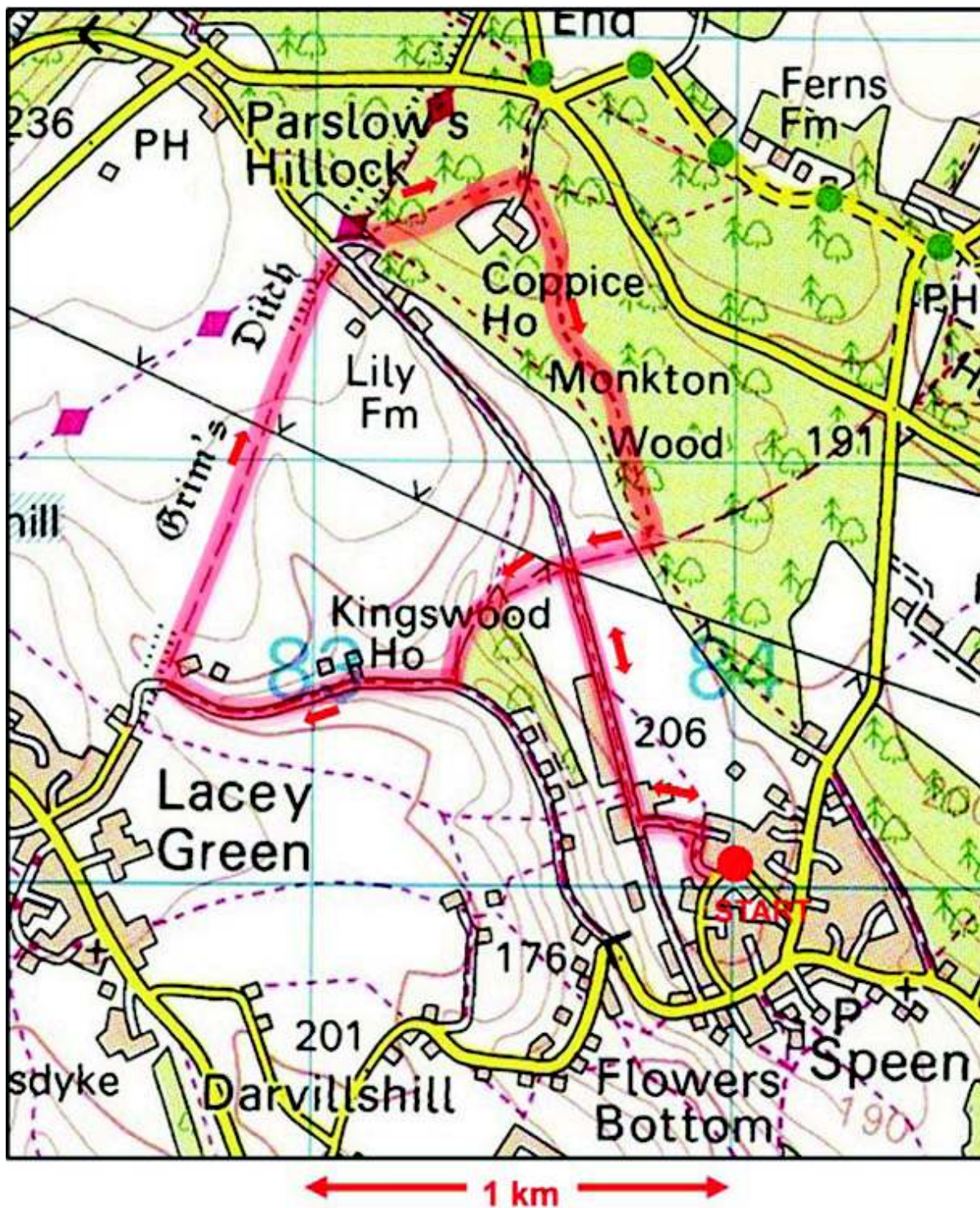
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Wildlife Watch by Peter Symonds

There have been a variety of interesting bird reports during the Summer and early Autumn period. One remarkable report was from Margaret Lewis who had a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker at her property in Woodview, not simply in the garden; this one flew into their house, stunning itself on the window. It was subsequently released. These birds are much smaller than the locally common Great Spotted Woodpeckers (see photo) and are very rare in our area although there was a further sighting of one in Prestwood on 2 August.



A Woodcock was seen on 27 June in the Great Hampden area whilst I noted a Little Owl on the fringes of Speen on the same date. Ravens have been reported from Naphill, a Grasshopper Warbler from Bryants Bottom and a Whitethroat from North Dean. The Autumn period sees some unusual birds passing through the area on migration. A Wryneck at Bacombe Hill, Wendover, in late September attracted countless bird watchers as did a Lapland Bunting at Bledlow in October. More locally one of our Red Kites was reported as having killed and taken an adult Wood Pigeon from a garden in Dairymede. Whilst they predominantly rely on carrion, small live prey like Mallard chicks can be taken by Kites but an adult Pigeon would be a challenging target.

The warm summer produced good numbers of butterflies on the slopes overlooking Flowers Bottom including Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns, Tortoiseshells together with a single Dark Green Fritillary. In August I photographed a large predominantly orange Silver Washed Fritillary visited our own garden as did a migratory Hummingbird Hawk Moth. There was also a report of a rare Silver Studded Skipper within the village.

However the Summer of 2010 will be remembered from my point of view as the "Year of the Grass Snake". In the last report I mentioned a three foot long Grass Snake seen in June in our main garden pond. This fitted in with a few occasional sightings over recent years. However over the following weeks I subsequently noted some five or possibly six Grass Snakes which varied in both diameter and length ranging from 6 inches to 3 feet long. The smallest one, seen on 7 August, was particularly interesting because it suggests breeding has occurred somewhere in the immediate vicinity. I took some dramatic pictures during the summer of one large snake eating one of the adult frogs in the pond wholesale. It appeared that many of the other frogs in the pond were so terrified by what they witnessed that they leapt from the pond to hide in the middle of the lawn on a very hot day trying to rely on their camouflage.



Please let me know of any interesting sightings.

Peter Symonds

01494 488016 or symonds@speen10.freeserve.co.uk

High Speed Two – the fight goes on

In the last issue of the Speen and North Dean News, we set out the threat posed by HS2 and outlined the weaknesses in the business case, the fallacies of the low-carbon argument put forward by Government and the sheer lack of affordability at a time when spending cuts to public services are almost unprecedented.

Since then, much has happened; we have been updating the village website on a regular basis and produced our first newsletter which gives a broad view of the current situation along with details of many of the activities of the Speen Area Action Group.

There is no doubt that the campaign against HS2 is gaining momentum and we are now one of over 60 action groups arguing against a scheme which increasingly defies logic, common sense and belief. Philip Hammond has visited several MPs along the route and other activities, such as the Bucks CC Summit meeting on the environment and a Parliamentary Lobby Day held on 25th October, have all raised the profile of the issues concerning the project.

Despite increasing activity against HS2, the Comprehensive Spending Review in October confirmed the Government's intention to proceed with HS2 and set aside £750 million over the next 4 years for preparatory works.

Government is now claiming that HS2 will provide an "economic lifeline for the great cities of the north" and that such regional regeneration means that the project has to go ahead in the "National Interest".

This notion is not supported by

HS2 Ltd's own reports to Government, nor is there any consistent evidence from international experience to prove that this is the case. In fact, the opposite effect is just as likely, with London and the South East sucking in investment, jobs and prosperity from the regions.

When we first started looking at HS2, the capital cost was in the region of £18 billion. With the announcement that a 'Y-shaped' alignment will take the route north to Manchester and Leeds, this has now risen to around £33 billion, so the problem is getting worse, not better.

On 20th December, the Government confirmed that the 'preferred route' which travels through Amersham, Great Missenden and Wendover will form the basis of the consultation in February 2011.

The question on most people's minds is 'what can we do?'. The period from now until the consultation, and then during the 3 - 5 months the consultation will run, is critical. During this time, pressure should be maintained on our local MP, the Transport Select Committee and the Treasury to ensure that the multiple failings of the HS2 plans are not ignored, and that this Government does not try to fool people into believing that the National Interest is being served.

To avoid being brushed off as a NIMBY, this pressure must be on the lack of need for HS2, the scandalous waste of money it represents and no evidence that this is in the National Interest - not primarily on the damage to our local environment.

Contact friends, relatives and business contacts around the country, as everyone who pays taxes, everyone who cares about education, local infrastructure, housing, pensions - the list is almost endless - will be impacted by this waste of £33 billion. Please check the website regularly - we will continue to

provide updates and key messages that can be used to influence policy makers.
www.speenbucks.org.uk

*Mel Foster
Chair*

*Speen Area Action Group
mel.foster@speenbucks.org.uk
488670*

North Dean Village Fete 2010 Competition Winners

Many congratulations to the following class winners, and thanks to everyone who entered this year's competitions. We look forward to receiving a wonderful number of entries next year too.

Pot Plant, The Campbell Cup - Jim Kent

Arrangement of Cut Flowers, The Weller Rose Bowl - Janet Cook

Single Bloom, Silver Rose Vase - Rachel Palmer

Home Made Wine/Beer, The Ryman Tankard - Mr M Jones

Cup Cakes, The Farmhouse Cup - Miss V Prentice

Fairy Cakes - Miss Sophie Duthoit

Fruit Jam, G Rogers Silver Tray - Mrs R Mc Cormick

Marmalade, John Lewis Bowl - Pauline Jones

Victoria Sandwich Cake - Pauline Jones

Any Fruits In Season - Janet Cook

Vegetables, The North Dean Challenge Cup - Gill Sandford
Prize Vegetable or Fruit of The Year, The Beau Vista Bell - Pauline Jones

Handicrafts and Art, 15yrs and older, The Rogers Bell - Charles Cook

Junior Handicrafts, 14 yrs and under - Jason Richardson
Junior Arts, 14 yrs and under - T Mitchell

Photography, Black and White, The Morgan Cup - Mr D Thurgood

Photography, Colour, The Evans Bowl - Mr N Jones

Best Garden, The Renee Ayres Cup - Pauline Jones

Health Care in the Community

Now you see it . . .

The NHS is an astonishing institution, the largest employer in Europe. Too big to disappear into the background when it comes to governments bound and determined to leave a mark on posterity, it becomes an easy target (or more accurately an uneasy target) for everyone's latest idea for making it effective, nimble, responsive, cost-effective, market-driven or whatever world-view is in charge at the time a change is mooted. Primary Care Trusts, it was believed, would make the commissioning of services fairer and more responsive to local needs. Targets would make it easier to decide who needed to improve and who deserved to get additional resources. It was a dramatic shift from the more medical model that preceded it, and did indeed improve access to certain kinds of services. Now that model is changing again. Now the aim is to get closer to communities, and GPs, not technocrats, will decide where the money goes. This change, as the one before it, needs to filter through more than a million people in order to work.

. . . Now you don't

We reflected on this while listening to a presentation from the community health services of Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust now providing acute care in Amersham, Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville. From April 2010 they have taken over the management of community services from the soon to be

phased out NHS Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust. (We know, we find it hard to keep the differences clear, too). What we heard were a team of highly professional and committed nursing practitioners. They were trying to make sense, for us punters, of their most immediate management change - the integration of Community Health Buckinghamshire and Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS. Under the new regime the objective is to bring care closer to home, and to emphasise care in the home, and to make community hospitals 'leaner'. The Buckinghamshire Hospitals team wants to emphasise the use of 'integrated teams', that is nursing professionals, social workers, carers, therapists of various kinds (but not mental health) and all those who could coordinate the care that a patient may need, and which once was found, expensively, under the roof of a hospital.

So, for instance, one's elderly parent might have a fall that required immediate surgical repair of a damaged hip. After some time spent recovering in an acute care hospital, like Amersham, the elderly patient would return home. People are often happier at home, but now we have someone who needs regular physiotherapy, and perhaps some emotional support through counselling. In addition, they may need someone to intervene to establish what disability benefits they should be receiving. Who organises the physiotherapist? Who monitors the diet, and the receipt of the appropriate benefits? How does the family get support? What is

the closest hospital providing the acute care?

The Trust also supports the Wycombe Birth Centre which recently reopened in November, after being closed in August because of staff shortages. A stand-alone midwife service, it has experienced some anxious times. It was even rumoured to be closing at one point.

Both these service units are very important to people in villages like ours. Last year we had a letter to the editor reflecting on how difficult it is to get about on our icy roads. Public transport in Speen is not an option for someone in a hurry. At the same time as Trusts are making decisions about what services will be available in formerly accessible hospitals, what beds will close, and what integrated teams will be able to offer, local councils are making decisions about who they can provide care to, who is a priority for therapy and who must wait.

So, take a closer look

Our health care system is big, and seems always with us, but when we come down to the fine detail of individual care in communities outside the cities, it can sometimes seem to go missing. Buckinghamshire Hospital Trust has a web site where you can learn more about initiatives and about how you can become active in helping the revamped services to hear community needs. We recommend taking a look at what's there.
www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk

The Editors

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Speen Playing Fields Report, Winter 2010

A new to-do list on the web means no more excuses

Autumn brings our end of summer work party on the playing fields with the general cutting back and tidying up for the winter. We had a good turnout from the village and managed to tick off a lot of jobs from the list including: staining the Pavilion, cleaning the play equipment, weeding the play areas, trimming the perimeter hedges and trees. We have started recording our maintenance tasks on the village website at <http://www.speenbucks.org.uk/speengroups/speen-playing-fields/spf-maintenance-tasks/> So, if you are unable to join our work parties and would like to help out then please visit the web page, choose a job to do and let us know when it's done! In the words of the animal hosts of a well-known comparison website . . . simples! Thanks to all who helped out on the work party.

We also welcomed back after a long summer holiday at a local yard, our near 50 year old traditional Wicksteed roundabout. Coming back with new bearings, frames and running boards and hopefully enough repairs to see the old girl through a few more years towards a second half century! I'm sure you would agree it's nice to see a traditional piece of play equipment still operating amongst all the vivid modern constructions we see in play areas today.

6th November saw the annual Bonfire and Fireworks event on the playing field. We were once again very lucky with the weather and a good crowd were



entertained by the traditional bonfire and a superb fireworks display. This year's fire was notable over ones from more recent years by its great height aided by some creative engineering design and a borrowed fork lift truck! Thanks Dilly.

Also thanks to all from the local community who helped source materials to burn and also those who helped construct our towering inferno! Bonfire night helps raise funds for our fields and also for the Pre-School who provided the catering. Your support is very much appreciated by both organisations and enabling them to continue to serve our community.

The next event was the carol singing and lighting of our new Christmas tree on Friday 17th December.

Thank you to all who came along and sang with gusto.

Once again thanks for all your help and support in keeping our green spaces and play areas in such good condition.

Andy Thompson
488524



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Speen Festival 2011 – the show goes on!

Our small village of Speen in the exquisite setting of the Chilterns has developed a unique festival reputation over recent years, combining a showcase of local talent, artistic flair and a great sense of fun.

Plans are already underway for the coming year, and the main programme is scheduled to take place between 8 - 18 September 2011. Make a note in your diary and watch out for regular updates through local outlets, newspapers and magazines, and of course from the Speen Festival website www.speenfestival.org.

Drama and visual arts will begin with our community music theatre production of 'The Dreaming', Howard Goodall's musical adaptation of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', with an all-age cast and local production team. Dates for auditions to be held in 2011 can be found on our Facebook page and our website - so if you have even the slightest urge to be on stage or back stage, step forward and find a role that suits you.

There will again be a food festival building on the first food festival in 2009, when local food producers and suppliers will be invited to offer demonstrations, tastings and participatory workshops

for all ages. There will be an evening of music and complementary readings linked to the local area, a jazz concert, live folk music, an open debate with an expert panel on topical science questions, and we also hope to have an evening's entertainment planned and presented by young adults.

Active participation events include 'Speen Goes Wild', with a children's wildlife event, a wildlife talk for all ages, and an outdoor survival event aimed at young people, plus cycling competitions for children and young teenagers, plus a new event for older teenagers and adults, featuring an adventurous bike-and-run circuit through the surrounding woods.

The 2011 Festival will culminate in a Cabaret Supper, a varied showcase of entertainment to amuse and inspire, to be performed by talented local actors and musicians, plus a delectable meal served up by local chef and team, and the grand finale will be the 'Prom in the Playing Field', a classical spectacular for all the family, featuring massed voices and instruments performed by local musicians, with audience participation.

In addition to the Main Festival Programme, SpeenFest Interactive! events will take place throughout the year. The programme has yet to be finalised but will be based on the highly successful first run of SpeenFest Interactive! events in and around Speen in the

period 2009 to 2010. Activities included workshops with expert writers, artists and musicians as well as collaborations with schools. We remain open to suggestions, so if there is something you would love to do as part of the Speen Festival 2011, please write to the editors. Or make yourself known on the website, <http://www.speenfestival.org/>

Speen Festival Committee

The Dreaming

The Festival plans something the Bodgers never thought to meet in our woods

Speen Festival 2011 is boldly stepping into the world of woodland mystery by staging THE DREAMING, a musical version of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Howard Goodall, the composer of such well-known theme tunes as The Vicar of Dibley and Blackadder, teamed up with lyricist Charles Hart (The Phantom of the Opera) to create this fabulous show for the National Youth Music Theatre.

The action is updated to Edwardian times, just before the start of the First World War. And it is set in a quiet hilltop village surrounded by woodland (remind you of anywhere?) . . .

It is Midsummer Eve. Unseen eyes hidden deep in the woods watch those who pass through this magical place. A young scruff of a local lad, Jack, is caught up in a woodland spat between Angel and Sylvia, the punkish tribal leaders of the woodlanders. Two young middle-class couples are tangled in romantic confusion.

Continued on page 27 . . .

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WI goes from strength to strength

Since our super birthday party in April we have talked over the Resolutions in May and we were delighted to welcome in June Keith Jansz who is wheel-chair bound and paints with the brush in his mouth. He had brought some of his lovely paintings to show us. Also in June we had our Big Friendly Coffee Morning which was mirrored over the county, adding both to our funds and the county's. Christine Oliver and Jean Elder spent two nights in Cardiff at the AGM, which Christine said was amazing. Some of our members enjoyed a lovely day out in Coventry and Kenilworth in July and Helen Slaymaker came to our meeting to tell us about being a nurse in the 'old' days and, on retiring, being a dog lover, she had decided to go into the dog grooming business. 'Catching Smugglers' was the highly interesting subject Malcolm Nelson talked to us about in August and quite a few of us enjoyed our picnic at Stowe, even though it poured with rain just as we sat down to eat our sandwiches. Even more annoying because the days before and after were fine and sunny but you can't win them all. However, we enjoyed a day out at Waterperry during the month with the gardening club. We also had two very successful plant sales outside our local shop. In September the tall and handsome Neil Rees spoke about the 'Czech Connection', when, during the war, various important Czechs came to Britain and stayed in various big houses out of the reach of the Nazis. Our meeting at the beginning of October was with Brenda Harold who gave a fascinating talk on 'New Genetics', which was an open

meeting and we were pleased to welcome some husbands and other villagers. Our last meeting was the Annual Meeting and in December we welcomed Mr G Burnett who gave a talk and showed slides of the 'Four Seasons'. Unfortunately I can't tell you what we will be having in January because the programme has not yet been handed out but, if last January is anything to go by, it will not be a great deal! We would love to welcome some new members. Do come and give us a try.

Barbara Collett
488348

Speen Village Hall

Thanks to the generosity of the Tennis Club, the Speen Shop Charity, the District and Parish Councils and our own fundraising we were able to refurbish the Village Hall Kitchen.

The kitchen now has new work surfaces and cupboards, an eye level double oven, an electric hob and two sink units. The work was carried out by Peter Taylor with considerable assistance from Chris Walsh. Combined with the new toilet facilities we now have a stylish hall available for hire.

We have welcomed two new members to the Management Committee - Barbara Bobroff and June Pilkington and we are pleased to see the return of Sue Taylor as Booking Secretary.

The Bridge Club on Monday afternoons has resumed after the summer break and the Gardening Evenings organised by the WI continue to prove popular.

See John Oliver's report and

walking map (centrespread) from the walk on Sunday 17th October.

Anybody wishing to hire the Village Hall should contact Sue Taylor on 488500.

Bill Groves
488180
Chairman
Speen Village Hall
Management Committee

... continued from page 25

And the lord of the manor is celebrating his birthday with a patriotic pageant of St George to be (badly) performed by the local tradesmen and farm boys.

The show has a distinctly spooky edge, mixed with superb comedy and some glorious tunes. Whether you are a budding actor, singer, or both, whether you are young or old, there is a part for you. This is undoubtedly the most ambitious production we will yet have staged, so this is your chance to be part of one of the most exciting local events of 2011!

Informal, fun audition workshops for under-18s will take place on Sundays 6 and 13 February 2011 with pre-pub Friday night sessions on 4 & 11 February to pull in the adults. The show is appropriate for ages 7 upwards with main parts allocated to teenagers, allowing us to cast the adults in the more ridiculous roles. Final location and times including details of how to enrol will shortly be posted on The Dreaming page on Facebook, on the Festival website, and posters displayed locally.

NB There will be a compulsory production week for under-18s and as many adults as possible the week of 29 August-3 September 2011. Performances Thursday 8, Friday 9, Saturday 10 September.

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District and County Council News – June 2010



Paul Rogerson says “is HS2 really in the national interest?”

High Speed Rail (HSR) is another issue which continues to dominate the agenda. Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Transportation, visited Aylesbury giving me an opportunity to ask him some direct questions about the proposals. From his answers it does look increasing likely that the Government's preferred option for Route 3 i.e. the Amersham/Wendover corridor will remain. It should be remembered that the announcement of the preferred route does not rub out those other routes which remain on the table and should the consultation process go against Route 3 then route 2.5 may come back into the frame.

The programme for HS2 was confirmed as:

1. Announcement of the preferred route late 2010
2. Public Consultation on the proposals commencing February/March 2011
3. Analysis of Consultation for 6 months ending 2011
4. Announcement of findings 2012

5. Government legislation to put HS2 into place 2012/13
6. Contract procurement 2014
7. Works commence 2015.

Philip Hammond conceded that the business case for the project needs further work, and with his announcement of the preferred Y shape it does look as if more emphasis will be being placed on regional development. He ruled out any upgrade on the existing West Coast Main Line on the grounds of disruption and capacity. Most significantly he remains firmly of the view that HS2 is in the National Interest. In the interview broadcast after the announcement Hammond made it very clear that he regarded any opposition from Buckinghamshire as just a NIMBY reaction to his plans. He dismissed the arguments with the comment, "is it not strange that all the arguments against the proposals have come from those who live along the route?". It is vital that between now and the start of consultation the challenge to Hammond is made to come forward with evidence that puts the 'Harm' that will be caused to the Countryside/ Chilterns AONB below the benefits to the country as a whole. Without this test how can anybody judge whether the government's case is sound and deliverable? So far nothing that has been put forward stands up to scrutiny and in this time of austerity, or at any time, to waste public money on a scheme that has so much uncertainty of outcome cannot be in the National Interest.

Road repairs and maintenance are another key issue. You will have seen the completion of the missing 'finger post' signing in Hampden. It has taken a very long time to get these in place but I hope you feel that it was worth the effort. As you will also have seen the County has reintroduced the policy for surface dressing minor roads. Pink Road, Chapel Hill and Peter's Lane have benefitted from the improved specification which should give a longer life to the road between treatments. Bryants Bottom Road requires a higher specification for the surface treatment and therefore was not part of the programme. I have asked that it be given priority for more permanent repairs and await proposals.

I would apologise for the lack of 'grass cutting' in Speen. The area by Abbotswood was done but the piece opposite the Speen Stores was not. This happened because the contract arrangements were taken back by the County Council and the list provided by the District was not up to date. This has been corrected and both areas will now be cut on a three weekly cycle through the season.

If you have a concern about either council services my email address is progerson@buckscc.gov.uk and my telephone number 01494 488315. So if you would like to contact me, I will do what I can to help.

*Paul Rogerson
progerson@buckscc.gov.uk
District and County Councillor*

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Speen Fete - Secretary	Nicki Pitt	488713
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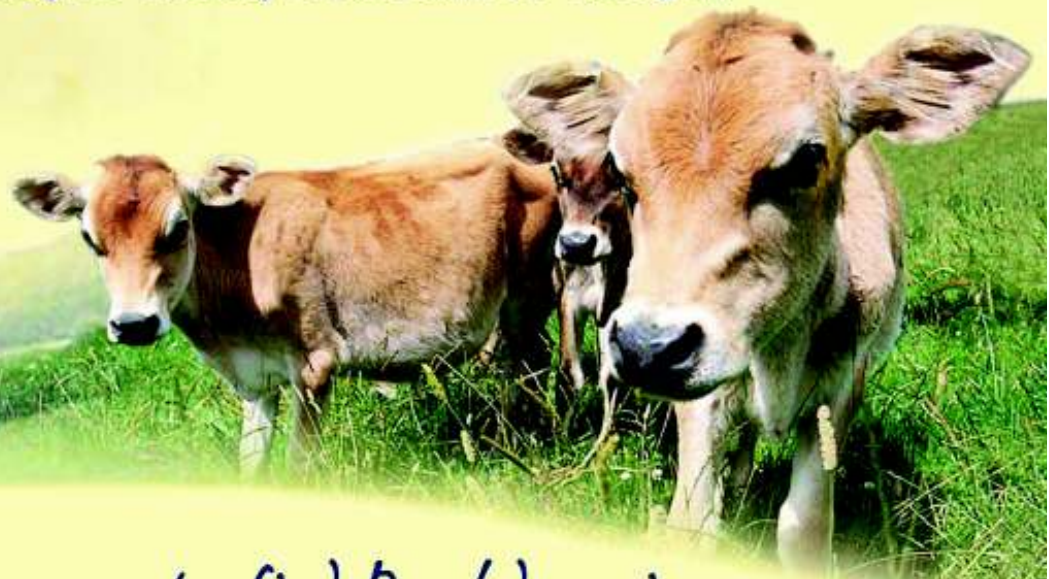


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