

Speen Heritage Trail

Points of Interest

(1) King William IV

A former farmhouse dating from 1668 which has had a liquor licence since 1827. In modern times this listed building, which features chequer brickwork under a clay tiled roof, has been a restaurant and village pub.

Turn right out of the pub towards Speen Stores

(2) **The Old Post Office** – on the corner of Hampden Road Formerly the village shop, post office, bakery and home to one of Britain's longest serving postmasters, George Ridgley, who was awarded the British Empire medal in 1947 for working until he was 93. It closed in 1980.

(3) **Speen Village Sign** – opposite the shop Erected in 2000 to celebrate key elements of the heritage of Speen it depicts a bodger, a lacemaker and the village chapel. The sign is set in a plinth made of local Denner Hill stone.



(4) Speen Stores and Post Office

Erected on the site of the former village filling station in 1998 as part of a Bucks Housing Association development of affordable housing - "a useful little shop"

Turn left from Hampden Road down Chapel Hill

(5) **The Old Dairy** – 2nd on the right, after Daيرmede In the 1930's this was a dairy run by the Saunders family.

(6) **Cottage Farm** – on the left at corner of Cottage Farm Way Built in 1860 this was originally two semi-detached cottages set in 10 acres. In one the Roberts family was engaged in tailoring and the other family dealt in hay and cattle.

(7) Abbotswood

Previously the site of a large single dwelling built in 1912 on land sold by Cottage Farm – one of several large dwellings built during that period for wealthy individuals.

(8) **Rosebank Cottage** – opposite the end of Abbotswood A listed building dating back to 1794 which features chequer brickwork under a hipped tiled roof. This dwelling was used as a village store for some time from the 1930s.

Turn right off Chapel Hill towards Pye Corner

(9) **Pye Cottage** – on the right A 1672 re-building of an earlier timber framed cottage. The date is carved into the beam over the inglenook.

(10) **Speen Baptist Chapel** – on the left further up the track Erected by villagers in 1802, with brick and flint under a clay tiled roof, this is the oldest place of worship in the village. It has been a focal point for members of the community through to the present day, with a strong and active congregation.

(11) Graveyard

beyond the chapel The burial place of many local residents including Eric Gill, of North Dean – famous sculptor, printer, writer and designer whose stone works can be seen in Westminster Cathedral and Broadcasting House – and also Joseph Nuttgens, the maker of stained glass.

(12) Lychgate

– at the Chapel Hill entrance The Lychgate to Speen Baptist Chapel commemorates the ten young village men who were casualties of the 1914–18 war.



Cross and turn left up Coleheath Bottom



Two of the last bodgers, Alex Dean and Bert Atkins working in the woods in about 1940.

(13) Coleheath Bottom

This bridleway forms the centuries old Monks Risborough Ecclesiastical Parish Boundary. Written references date back to the 10th Century. The semi-detached cottages half way along Coleheath Bottom feature names from the Boer War era - Peace and Pretoria Cottages. Towards the northern end is a site where a Hurricane crashed during World War II into College Plantation.

(14) Monkton Wood

The woods ahead comprise some 180 acres of typical Chiltern beechwood, originally part of a large area of Common Woodland – manorial land available for the use of commoners. Here local bodgers turned chair legs for the famous Windsor chairs produced in High Wycombe from 1800 through until the 1940s using primitive pole lathes in simple thatched huts.

Turn left back into the village along Hampden Road

(15) **Hampden Road** leads north east to Great Hampden village, which is dominated by Hampden House, ancestral home of John Hampden (1595-1643), one of the foremost leaders of the Parliamentarians during the English Civil War who famously refused to pay the Ship Tax (or "Ship Money" as it was known).

(16) The Manse

– on the right after Monkton Way The Chapel Trustees built this cottage for the resident minister in 1868 using traditional brick and flint construction funded by collections at lectures and sacred music events organised by Cornelius Ward.

(17) Rose Cottage

– on the left almost opposite Studridge Lane Built after the 1823 Enclosures by Joshua Ward, this cottage features flint with locally quarried Denner Hill stone quoins under a Welsh slate roof. It is built at an angle to the road due to the alignment of the plots allocated at the time of the Enclosures.

Turn into Studridge Lane

(18) The King George V Jubilee Memorial Playing Field

Previously an orchard attached to the pub, the field was purchased by the village in 1935 for £160 with loans from wealthy residents and grants including one from The King George V Jubilee Fund. Further land was bought in 1970.

(19) Village Hall

The building dates from 1873 and was used as a Temperance Hall after chapel goers split over differing beliefs. The village community bought the Hall for £125 in 1924. The wrought iron gates commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 whilst the building features fine brick and flint work and sliding sash windows.



Continue right along Studridge Lane turning left at the fork

(20) **Elm Tree Cottage** – formerly two cottages built in the 17th or 18th century this is a listed building which features chequered brickwork under a clay tiled roof.

(21) **The Old Bakehouse** – on the right after Archway Originally used for wood turning this property later provided bread for the village before George Ridgley's bakery opened at the Old Post Office.

(22) Studridge Lane Pond

– on the right The last of four ponds providing water reserved for public use. (Note - The Water Lane pond was not reserved for public use).

(23) Spinning Wheel Cottage

– on the left Formerly the Plumridge family home, it features a replica of the old timber clad workshop where chair legs and back spindles were turned before the 1930s. William Plumridge also founded the Speen Brass band and supported the Chapel orchestra. After World War II Speen Weavers and Spinners operated here until the 1980s



Turn right at the junction and walk down the slope

(24) **The Old School House** – on the corner of Grubbins Lane Built in 1860, it originally comprised not only 2 classrooms but also accommodation for the schoolmistress. It catered for around 50 pupils with ages from under 2 to 14. Until 1935 there were two earth closets at the top of the playground with no running water. It was replaced by the current school in 1966.

(25) Grubbins Lane

The name may derive from the clearing, or grubbing, of original woodland. The lane led to Speen Kiln Farm, another beer house, rebuilt as Red House Farm after a fire. Brick making using local clay took place here in the 1860s.

Cross the road, walk down to the gate and enter the field to take in the view of Flowers Bottom and Highwood Bottom to the right, where Cooper, the highwayman allegedly lurked.

(26) The Old Plow Inn

– in the distance down in the valley This was a village inn from 1610, reputedly visited by Samuel Pepys and Charles II. In the 1930s it was run by Ishbel MacDonald, daughter of Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald. More recently it was a renowned restaurant but is now used as a residence.

(27) Speen Farm (now The Home of Rest for Horses)

The distant pasture on the far slope forms part of Speen Farm, a hilltop settlement dating from the 15th century. It was occupied in 1971 by a charitable foundation providing respite care for working horses, including IRA victim Sefton.

Return to the road and proceed up the hill

(28) The Old King George

– set back on the right A village pub from about 1868 until 1954 when the brewery decided two village pubs were sufficient, this listed building still exhibits some 17th century timber framing.

(29) **Chapel Cottage** – the white rendered cottage on the left Believed to have been registered as a place for dissenting worship in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Turn left at the shop to return to the start

