



Issue 4
Spring 1995

Speen and North Dean News

Speen resident has narrow escape...

A BONFIRE TOO FAR...

The owner of this car is more noted for organising fires on the playing field than in Water Lane. This is where she was forced to leap from her car as smoke began to pour from under the bonnet. Moments later the vehicle was engulfed in flames.

I saw Don White preparing to wade in with his extinguisher, but the Fire Brigade got there first!



STILL NO DECISION ON SHOP - AS OPPOSITION TO NEW PLAN GROWS

An application to demolish Speen Stores and build a house on the site was first heard by the Planning Committee in February. We believe that a majority of members were minded to allow it, but were persuaded to delay for more detailed information. This also concentrated minds in Speen. A call for local opinions, from the parish council, has resulted in a large number of letters from residents, virtually all strongly in favour of keeping the shop option open. Armed with these and a prepared speech, Jean Gabbitts was well equipped for a pro shop fight at the planning meeting on 15th March. But since no further details had been produced by the applicants, Nat West, the matter had to be postponed until the next meeting. *See also the Editorial on page 3.*

Miss Joyce Coleman 1906 - 1995

Joyce left this world peacefully on 7th March, at Wycombe General Hospital. Well renowned for her spinning and weaving talents, she was also well known for her strong personality, directness and determination. As a village we will miss her.

Personally, as one of her many helpers, I would like to pay tribute, not only to Joyce's fortitude during her illness, but express my gratitude to the one person who helped her more than anyone in her final years. Fred Burnham coped with broken nights, days off work, and in the last weeks, virtual 24 hour care, as Joyce was unable to do anything for herself. From all of us, thank you Fred, you are one in a million.

Irene Tinsley

Some useful numbers



le téléphone

BAPTIST CHURCH Sunday 10.30 am VICAR OF LACEY GREEN AND SPEEN BEAVERS Wed 5.15-6.15pm CUBS Wed 6.30-8.00pm	- Dave King	- 0494 450611 (daytime)
	- Rev. P.R.L. Hale - Margaret Gray	- 0844 347741 - 0844 347094
	- Pauline Hall	- 488372
CRICKET CLUB FETE COMMITTEE GOOD NEIGHBOURS GUIDES Thursdays HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY MOTHERS AND TODDLERS Tues 10.00-11.45am	- Mike Bounds - Peter Dawson (sec) - Gloria Holmes (org) - Pauline Hall	- 488572 - 488222 - 488420 - 488372
	- Ted Drew - Christine Dunnington	- 488738 - 488203
NORTH DEAN VILLAGE NORTH DEAN VILLAGE HALL PARISH COUNCIL	- Bridget Lister (Newsletter) - John Rogers - Don White - Jude Awdry	- 563153 - 562041 - 488437 - 488607
PLAYGROUP Daily 9.30-12.00am PLAYING FIELDS ASSC. SPEEN DST. COUNCILLOR SPEEN SCHOOL OFFICE SPEEN SCHOOL PTA	- Viv Goldie Jones - Jeanne Hanford - Jean Gabbitas - Amanda Cleaver - Paul & Alice Corrick	- 443570 - 488402 - 0844 346469 - 488321 - 488288 - 565380
SPEEN VILLAGE HALL	- Catherine Butler (bookings) - Stan Bale (committee)	- 488412 - 488015
TABLE TENNIS TENNIS COURT THEATRE\OUTINGS CLUB W.I. 1st Thursday of every month	- Jim Lawrence - Roger Craft - Shelia Tidball - Barbara Collett(sec)	- 0844 344610 - 488434 - 488377 - 488348

LIBRARY BUS - Every 2nd Monday 10.20-11.00am - Bus Stop top of Hampden Rd.

POST OFFICE - Every Tuesday 12.30 - 2.30pm - Speen Village Hall

GOOD NEIGHBOURS - If you need help, or can offer help, tel: Doris Wilson 488334, Margaret Jones 488244 or Poppy Ellis 488548.

EDITORIAL

As we go to press, Mrs Gabbittas has shown us a large pile of photocopies of letters sent to the Director of Planning, objecting to the application to replace Speen Stores with a new house. Unfortunately our printing deadline, space and time needed to get authors' permissions prevents us from publishing the views directly this time. So allow me to say that they have a similarity in concentrating on the basic desirability for the option of a shop on the present site to remain open. Some hint at how they think the previous attempt to run Speen Stores may have failed.

None of the letters went into the practicalities of sustaining a viable shop under our local conditions because that was not part of the present exercise, which was to block any change of use in principle. But it could be a very difficult case to argue against a change, where there has been no

new initiative in five years, in a village where nearly every household owns a car, there is no passing trade and a supermarket exists only three miles away. The decision is delayed, but that shop site doesn't get any prettier!

It seems obvious that there is no existing plan for a specific redevelopment otherwise it would have been produced to the Planning Committee. The likely conclusion is, therefore, that this current application is a valuation exercise. Presumably it would be easier for the present owners to sell the present property with a redevelopment option already approved?

It might be interesting to read the ideas of residents on how they think a new shop enterprise might be started and become viable.

ADVERTISING

Irene Tinsley is the advertising member of our team. If you would like your advertisement to appear - and we don't charge a great deal

then please contact Irene on 488443



PLEASE NOTE

The views and opinions expressed in Speen and North Dean News do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor and he reserves the right to edit as necessary. (However, our normal policy will be to consult with contributors on those rare occasions when significant editing may seem necessary.)

A great atmosphere at North Dean's VILLAGE NIGHT



Blame the photographer for picking the wrong moment. This was actually a very jolly lot moments before. But you know how it is when someone insists that you all sing carols - you've had a few drinks already and the print is small. Besides, you can't sing anyway! (or, in one case, it's way past bedtime).



DO WE GET LETTERS...?

"..growing like an infectious disease..."



Dear Editor,

I have read with great excitement your first 3 issues of the local newsletter and may I congratulate you on its content and clarity.

You asked on page 2 for people to write in and I thought I could do no better than actually quote you from your Editor's letter from Issue 3. Your first paragraph I think bears the rump of my feelings for it must be now 5 years that the village of Speen has sat with a disused shop, with petrol pumps, an altogether unsightly mess - also over the last 3 years no one could have failed to notice the unsightly dump now growing

like an infectious disease on the way out of Speen on the left-hand side.

I believe both properties are owned by someone who cares nothing for the village - Is it not time that somebody - either the inhabitants, the Council, the planners, anybody, took the matter in hand and certainly dealt with the festering, growing sore on the outskirts, presumably without planning permission, to return the village of Speen to what it used to be when I lived there 13 years ago at Rosebank Cottage, Chapel Hill.

We had a shop - we had a post office, and we had a bakers, where you could even

take your turkey to be cooked - and a box inside the door to leave money for any bread that you took.

We ourselves moved house with some regret a long time ago, but I would urge the remaining residents to join together and to object to the above for, who knows, whoever owns these two unsightly areas will next buy something along the entry to Speen from either North Dean or from the Home of Rest for Horses, and make a complete mess of what is - or what was a lovely village and its surroundings.

**PETER G. KEEN
UPPER NORTH DEAN
FARM**



NEVER MIND A YOUTH CLUB, LET'S HAVE LATER BUSES TO AND FROM WYCOMBE

Dear Editor,

I have lived in Speen for 13 years, now, and as much as I feel that Speen is a pretty village, with a lot to offer young children, with reasonable safe roads, clean air and lots of spacious countryside, it now has little to offer older teenagers such as myself.

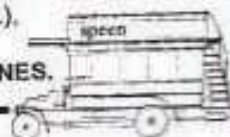
When my peers and I were younger - we are now 16 - we had the option to go to youth club or, for the boys, to scouts, but now these do not exist. I feel that the lack of youth club is more of a loss

for the younger teenagers (12 - 13), as we aren't interested in the youth club scene any more. Something that would be more useful and better appreciated is if we could have a more regular and extended bus service, to include later evening journeys. At the moment, if you don't want to be dependent on others, the latest you can go out on a weekday is 5.30 pm! and on a Saturday, 1.30 pm! It sounds ridiculous and it is. I feel a bus on Sunday would also have a great reception. These buses would not only serve young people wanting to go out of an evening, but also the older members of our community who can't drive and would like to visit

friends, attend the theatre or just go to Wycombe later than 5.30.

I close on the point that although efforts to start another youth club are very much appreciated, **the youth of Speen would really like to become the youth of High Wycombe**, as Wycombe can sustain a greater variety of activities for teenagers. (I hope to form a petition and send it to all the relevant bus companies, asking for more buses to visit Speen. If anyone would like to sign it, please feel free to call in at any time to Christmas Cottage, Chapel Hill - opposite Abbotswood.).

Thank you,
HILARY JONES.



A DROP-INN CENTRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

It has been suggested that the teenagers in the community might like to have their own regular meeting place - call it a Drop-Inn Centre - in the village, where they

could meet their friends for a coffee/coke and maybe arrange activities - perhaps a programme of events. A group of parent volunteers could arrange a rota of support for the centre. Is this a good idea? Comments and

suggestions would be welcome.
GLORIA HOLMES 488420

*Stokenchurch Youth Centre will be pleased to help with training and support for any youth venture in the village.
Tel: 482822 and ask for Margaret or Lynn*

A Walk Around Speen



John Holmes suggests a walk of about 6 miles. It includes beechwoods and views. There is one steep climb, a pub stop at the Pink & Lily, and a short-cut if it rains.

The Walk

Start at the old bus stop in Chapel Hill. Go down Water Lane, passing John Butler's pond, into a large field (called the Prairy).

Turn right and follow the hedge down-hill into a wood (called Guy's Spring). Straight on, noting the foxholes in the bank. Turn left at the stile at the bottom - the field by the stile is part of the Home of Rest for Horses.

Straight on along the valley bottom, through two grass fields, to a stile near a water trough. Across a ploughed / maize field (depending on the season), over a stile by a gate, right over another stile and into a track coming out in North Dean. Right, down the road, then left into a narrow footpath just beyond the Long House.

Over a stile and a steep climb with a fence on your left. Left over a stile under a large oak tree, and right up-hill again until you come to the workshop of Mr. Nutgyens, the glass craftsman. Take the middle path on your left, through the wood, and over a stile into the top of a field with long views to Speen. Straight on to a stile, a muddy track, another stile, and into a grass field.

Turn half left, to a rough stile in a hedge. Then straight on, keeping a fence on your right, to a stile next to a gate. Then up Chapel Hill to the Scout centre and right into Coleheath Bottom. Straight on, across the Hampden Road, and along the wood edge to Iron Beech cottage. (There are several points along this section where you could turn left and short cut back to Speen). Turn right in to a lane and along to the Pink & Lily for a well earned break.

Return along the same lane, keeping straight on, passing Lily Bottom Farm and negotiating a very wet section. Then on along Grubbins Lane and back to Speen.



..There is one steep climb..



Foot(sore)note:

If lacking time or energy, treat as two walks, north or south of Hampden Road; going south for the view, when energetic, and north when you're thirsty - suggests the Editor!

A HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARDS THE GUIDES OF EASTERN EUROPE

FROM 1ST HUGHENDEN VALLEY GUIDES

All of this term we have been occupied working on our play which the whole company are performing for their entertainers badge. The Guides also have to perform a short item alone or in small groups and considerable talent is developing in these sketches. The performance will be on March 16th, sadly lack of space means only a limited audience of

parents can be invited. We are hoping to take a collection at the end of the performance which will go towards a fund to bring Eastern European Guides to an international camp to be held in Bucks this summer. Until recently Guide companies in Eastern Europe had to meet in secret and they are now starting to enjoy contact with Guides from around the world.

PAULINE HALL



SPEEN THEATRE CLUB



So far this year we have had two successful outings to see "Singing in the Rain" Oxford, and "The Passionate Woman" in London. We have sold all our

tickets for our March trip to see "Oliver" at the London Palladium.

We are booking now for "The Woman in Black" on April 28th. This play is a thriller by Susan Hill, and we have seats in row F of the stalls. Cost, including the coach will be £19.50. Tickets available from Sheila, tel: 488377.

A note for your diary - we have booked again for the "Last Night of the Proms", concert at Radley College on July 22nd. This was

much enjoyed by those who came last year. We took picnics, and really entered into the spirit of the occasion! If you would like to join us this year, please contact Jo, tel: 488629.

NB. Membership rates now reduced to £3 until July. - contact Sheila, tel: 488377

TREAT YOURSELF TO A BIT OF CULTURE AND JOIN US.

SHEILA TIDBALL

SPEEN'S TABLE TENNIS TEAMS have made a great start to the season.

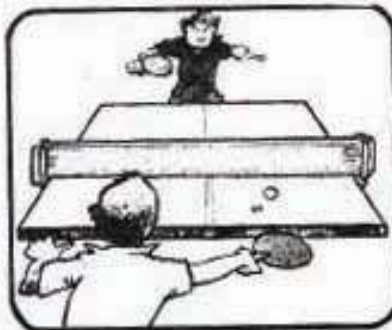
Speen's 1994/95 season in the High Wycombe District League is now almost at the half-way stage.

All three teams have made a promising start. Speen A are well up among the leaders in Division 3. Speen B (Jimmy Lawrence's team), promoted last year are just over half way in Division 4, and Speen C (Peter Clarke's team) are expected to win Division 6 with a spirited challenge in the second half.

There have been some especially good performances by our younger players. Matthew Hickman was selected by the League to

play in the English Youth Championships at Peterborough on Saturday December 3rd.

On the next day, Sunday December 4th, Richard Peake of Hampden Road, Speen was selected to represent High Wycombe at Burnham,



in an under 14's Cadet Inter League Tournament, including teams from Slough, Maidenhead, Milton Keynes and the Chilterns. Against stiff opposition, he did extremely well in all his games and, in a nail-biting thrilling encounter at the end of the afternoon, he came through to win 2-1.

Currently (January) the three league teams are playing for the Roland Sewell Trophy: a Team Knock-Out Handicap Competition in which all teams of the High Wycombe League's six divisions take part. Each of our three teams is safely through the first round.

Gordon Locke

EXPEDITION TO BORNEO - Marion and Roger Hussey climb Malaysia's tallest mountain

The W.I. - a sexist lot by definition - only rarely invites the menfolk. My excuse was to take a photo of the February meeting.

I was glad I arrived a bit early and caught much of Marion Hussey's superb slide lecture on her and Roger's trip to Sabah. Sabah is a Scotland-sized Malaysian state sharing the great island of Borneo with Indonesia. I arrived at the point where Marion was showing the Orang Utan orphan rehabilitation centre situated in the rainforest and geared towards teaching orphan Orangs to be jungle-wise apes and not the misplaced semi 'humans' which misguided people had begun to make them after capture or rescue from logging. We all laughed as Marion described how all the Orang students at the jungle 'academy' were fed very largely on bananas; the idea being the Orangs would become so sick of bananas that once released in the forest they would never attack the plantations and, consequently, not become targets for the growers.

Next there was a trip to an offshore island given over entirely to the protection and propagation of the rare Green Turtle. It was so simple yet effective how this was done. The pregnant female would be watched over as she laboriously dug out her nest on the

beach. The hundred or so eggs, once laid, were then gathered up by the wardens (and in this instance by Marion and Roger) and placed in a fenced-in and protected enclosure within neat lines of artificial man-made nest holes. Then what looked like a wire shopping basket was placed over each. Once the eggs hatched, the baby turtles were safely assembled in the 'shopping basket' from which they would be gathered up then taken down to the surf and released - during the hours of darkness to minimise predators. (Again, Marion and



Roger were delighted to be enrolled for the procedure).

The wonderful climax of their expedition was a climb up Mount Kinabalu, at 13455 feet Malaysia's highest mountain. As you know, Marion and Roger are around pensioner age, yet all through the various climate and vegetation zones during the ascent they kept on taking pictures of the feast of beautiful and unique plants which they came across.



Their party of eighteen camped below the summit with the intention of resting for a few hours before setting out for a final climb to the top in time to see the sunrise on what must be one of the most wonderful vistas on Earth. According to Marion several of the party did not have the energy to start out on this final push to the top, but she and Roger were among those who did, Roger reaching all the way and Marion only stopping within five hundred feet of the pinnacle. It would have been quite a feat to non mountaineers half the age of this couple from Speen!

At this point Marion showed us a slide of a deep and mysterious gorge which they came close to but did not enter - wisely, I'm sure - it was where that British party almost lost their lives last year, if you recall. Marion and Roger's only regret was that they did not have time in this adventure-packed itinerary to go back and take a more leisurely look at some of the places enroute. *My one regret was having missed the other half of Marion's delightful lecture.*

ED

W.I. It seems ages ago now but we did have an enjoyable Christmas meeting with mulled wine, sausage rolls, mince pies, etc. Unfortunately, our speaker, Mrs. Dorey, was unable to come but luckily we were able to persuade Grace Stickings, who came up trumps with a marvellous talk recalling her teenage years as an actress in Canada - her most memorable role being that of Anne in Anne of Green Gables. She performed before the Queen and also was a wow in Japan.

We had our usual get-together in January but do not usually have a speaker from outside in case the weather is bad. However, we did manage to get a couple of

speakers from 'inside'. Firstly Lois Bale convinced us all that Australia was the place to go for that unforgettable vacation, and Christine Oliver walked us across the Yorkshire moors, mostly, it seemed, in the rain! We all felt quite exhausted when she had finished but she insisted it was great fun. After refreshments we had a very short beetle drive consisting of only three games until it was time to pack up.

We were delighted to welcome Marion and Roger Hussey in February, who showed us some lovely slides of Sabah the new name for northern Borneo. Marion is a wonderful commentator and how she remembers all the

strange names I'll never know.

We have a competition most months and Winnie Lowes won a prize for winning the most competitions over the year.

We have been especially pleased to see one or two new faces at our recent meetings and trust these ladies will continue to enjoy our meetings.

COMING EVENTS:

30th March - Group Meeting
Lady Felicity Harewood - My Life at No. 10

6th April - Our Birthday Party.

4th May - Resolutions meeting

BARBARA COLLETT - Secretary

SPEEN W.I.

MORE FUN FUNDRAISING

Gloria, it seemed, went to extraordinary lengths, organising this event just to get a free make-over. Just kidding, of course; this fund-raising effort has paid for our next issue of the newsletter.

The three newsletter helpers seated right are Mary, Danielle and Irene. Standing at the rear is Esthetique boss, Margot.



Models Gloria and Susanne sit suitably transfixed to get the full treatment from Karen, who did the hair and Michelle, who did the make up. Michelle also gave a fine commentary and answered audience questions as she went along.



Audience concentration was total (well almost) for this hair and make-up demonstration by Esthetique Hair and Beauty Clinic of Great Missenden, held in Speen Methodist Church Hall on 23rd February. Thanks to these organisations and also to Speen School for the loan of a portable stage.



SPEEN FETE '95

SEND IN THE CLOWNS!

The mention of a fairground organ and a miniature train being offered for this year's fete led someone on the fete committee to cry out "That's it, that's our theme - FAIRGROUND AND CIRCUS".

Everyone else agreed. When told of this, the Chinnor Silver Band said "great, that will be our theme for what we'll play." I guess that many of the children will enjoy dressing and making up in that style - but the big question remains, how many of the WI and the stallholders, for example, will

enter into the spirit? The message from the committee is - "go for it - not only save your own red noses this year, but steal all those belonging to your mates." At this very moment Dave King is desperately looking for a ringmaster's outfit at local jumble sales!

The charity chosen for this year is MacMillan Nurses. Sadly, so many of our local residents have recently had to be cared for by this wonderful organisation.

SPONSORS AND

ADVERTISERS WANTED

About 3000 programmes will be printed and distributed not only in Speen. Would your company like to give a bit of sponsorship and/or have an advert published.

IDEAS AND HELP WANTED

And if you can think of anything which might be fun to do at the fete (anything moral and legal, that is) then please suggest it to the committee. It can be fun just helping on the day or lending a hand with the setting up. For any of the aforementioned - contact Paul Rogerson on 488315.

ED

CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS



It will have come to your notice that the Parish Council have been tidying up and we hope improved the environs of the pond in Studridge Lane. This work was carried out by volunteers organised by the BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) from their High Wycombe Office. It might be of interest to readers to have background information about the BTCV whose corporate slogan

is "People working for a better Environment" and is the country's largest practical conservation charity. Established in 1959 under the name of Conservation Corps and changed its name to BTCV in 1970. The BTCV owns no land itself but works with landowners, local authorities, business and statutory organisations.

It involves people from all backgrounds in protecting their local environment in a practical way - both in cities and countryside supporting the activities of over 84,000 persons in their steps to improve local environment. Buckinghamshire is part of the East Anglia area of BTCV has three offices with a full time County Manager, the offices are situated in High Wycombe, Aylesbury, and Milton Keynes and are staffed by volunteers. They undertake a substantial amount of directly organised project work at weekends, with some week long

working holidays and also weekday groups run from the three centres. They work closely with the County Council, the District Councils, British Waterways, and some Parish Councils.

Many well known firms support the funding of BTCV including Marks & Spencer, British Gas, British Telecom and Barclays Bank. Southern Electric assisted in the funding of Gomm's Wood, a BTCV demonstration woodland in High Wycombe owned by the Wycombe District Council, who are actively involved in the management through their Community Woodlands Project who are very supportive of the BTCV's work in the District.

Further information on the work of the BTCV can be obtained from:- The Countryside Centre, Bassetsbury Manor, Bassetsbury Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 1QX - Tel 01494 536930

GEORGE CROMBIE -Clerk to Lacey Green Parish Council.

By lucky coincidence, the splendid work of the BTCV plus the efforts of 'global watering' has resulted in a better than average body of water to greet those of the local frogs which survived crossing the road to spawn this year. If only we could get that drain unblocked and a lower put in...

SPEEN'S BIRDS IN THE SPRINGTIME

Watch them says Fred Burnham...

SPEEN'S BREEDING BIRDS

Most gardens in and around Speen have hedges. We also have several ponds, plus a number of mixed woodlands, which gives us a high breeding bird density. The Blackbird is the most common breeding bird.

My thanks go to the following people: Miss M. Campbell has had Speckled Flycatcher nesting 43 years out of 45. Miss Coleman had Bullfinches nesting for 20 years in an old hawthorn. Mrs. R. Vergine, amongst others, has recorded Goldcrests nesting in a hedge. This is our smallest British bird.

The oldest local record, 1939, had Barn Owl, Skylark and Red-Backed Shrike. The Shrike stopped breeding in Bucks in the fifties, Barn Owls are down to six breeding pairs in the county and Skylarks don't like grazing animals.

Moorhens are here, unexpectedly on the top of a hill! Mallard have, to date, been thwarted by foxes. The largest wild breeding bird in our area is the Pheasant. Red-Legged

Partridge have taken the place of the Grey Partridge, which is in decline nationally. This story unfortunately repeats itself with Songthrush and Yellowhammer.

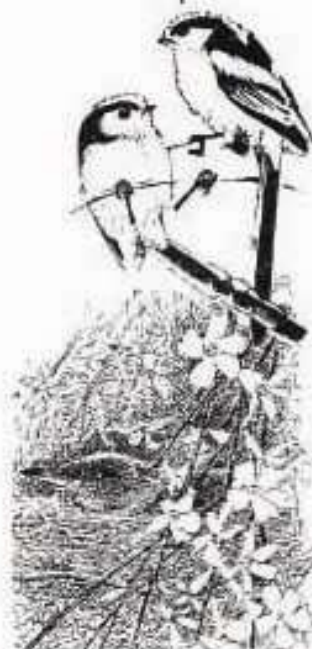
A pair of Swallows has nested in Flowers Bottom - is this a new record?

Other breeding birds recorded here include: Blackbird, Speckled Flycatcher, Goldcrest, Moorhen, Pheasant, Red-Legged Partridge, Songthrush, Mistle Thrush, Yellowhammer, Swallow, House Martin, House Sparrow, Hedge Sparrow, Blue Tit, Linnet, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Starling, Cuckoo, Nuthatch, Jay, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Green Woodpecker, Greater and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, Collared Dove, Pied and White Wagtails, Kestrel, Sparrow Hawk, Lesser Whitethroat, Tawny and Little Owls, Garden Warbler. Some visiting winter birds; Fieldfare, Redwing, Brambling, Wryneck.

Please send me any missed off my list of breeding birds.

Are there any other records of birds returning to the same Speen

SHUSH!
THE YELLOW
FREDMOBILE IS
ABOUT.



nesting site over many years - House Martins for example?
FRED BURNHAM



Red-
backed
Shrike

I must admit, Fred's reference to the disappearance, from England, of the Red-backed Shrike in the fifties, gave me a recurrence of the guilt feeling for having unwittingly contributed to its demise. But, to be fair, it was really my mate Harold what done it, guv.

It was in the late forties and like most other young country lads of those days I collected birds' eggs; hard to believe now that such was our ignorance. The only 'rule of honour' so to speak, was that you took only one or two from a clutch and none which were already 'addled' (chicks growing in them). The younger lads learned the techniques of 'bird-nesting' from their older brothers and friends. Harold Nash, four years my senior, was my natural history mentor for a while. Before a new egg was added to one's collection its contents had to be removed. There were two ways of doing it: two pin holes, blowing at one end with the liquid contents oozing out the other, or one slightly larger hole and sucking the contents out through a straw. Harold had a genuine interest in nature, but then so do many others who nevertheless kill small creatures for the fun of it. Harold's dad was a part-time game-keeper and Harold often accompanied him on his punitive raids against nature predators. Harold showed us his grisly trophies with massive pride. Sometimes these included the tortured little corpses of creatures which had endured unspeakable agony in his father's snares, not all of them predators. I can see it now as he held in one hand the ruffed body of a sparrow hawk and in the other a kestrel, to show me the difference between the two species.

Anyway, getting back to the demise of the Red-backed Shrike, Harold one day, appeared at our door with the excited news that a Red-backed Shrike was actually nesting in some thorny scrub up the hill. And there it was, high up in the bush keenly looking out for insect prey (they store them impaled on thorns) - my first and only sighting of a Red-backed Shrike. Harold was an expert, he knew that this species was rare. Yet to him this seemed the best possible reason for collecting its eggs. He emerged from the bush with two of them carefully concealed in his mouth. 'I've left three others', he confided as he blew them and gave one to me, carefully wrapped in a dock leaf.

Over the next few years, the Red-backed Shrike rapidly vanished from the English countryside. Harold and I had done our bit towards speeding its demise.

One bird gone, but since then another has returned, also with the help of humans. Fred asks for new bird sightings around Speen. If only he would give license for those seen about three miles away I could make a superb addition to his list. But I suppose it would not strictly count that I have many times watched the Red Kite soaring above the Chiltern Hills. We should be proud that those who have been re-introducing it, chose the Chilterns for their experiment. I believe that some of the founding birds came from their last British refuge in Wales and with some from Spain. The whole programme was supposed to be 'secret', but how can you hide a soaring raptor which in size is somewhere between the Buzzard and the Golden Eagle? I hear that last year alone about forty young were brought off amongst the implanted population of Red Kites in the Chilterns. Marvellous! I nearly crashed my car when I saw my first Red Kite hunting close to the ground just beyond that 'gorge' in the escarpment cut out for the M40. Since then Mary and I have seen them many times, the nearest being a pair soaring in typical style above the feature known as Happy Valley on the nature reserve near Cadogan, within three miles of Speen. I'd guess I went back next day with our grandchildren and they were still there, their unique V-shaped tails silhouetted against the sky - a lovely addition to local fauna.

Ed.



Red
Kite

== THE OLD PLOW BISTRO/RESTAURANT == AT SPEEN

SPRING BARFOOD AND BISTRO MENU

- Provincial fish and shellfish soup with rouille - £3.95*
- Avocado, paw paw and brie salad - £4.95*
- Farmhouse cheese selection with grapes, crudites and walnuts - £4.95*
- French smoked chicken salad with pineapple - £4.95*
- Avocado and giant prawns salad - £6.95*
- Venison and chicken terrine with sweet mustard fruits - £4.95*
- Old Plow antipasta with prawn, smoked salmon, squid, mussels, artichoke hearts and sun-dried tomatoes - £6.95*
- Scotch oak smoked salmon and fish pate with a lime and caper sauce - £4.95*
- Scotch oak smoked salmon platter - £6.95*
- Fresh mussels, steamed in white wine with a herb, lemon, olive oil and garlic dip - £5.95/£7.95*
- Hot ratatouille tart with a tomato basil fondue and a tossed salad - £5.95*
- Hot escargot tart with onion, garlic and fresh parmesan and a tossed salad - £3.95*
- Cassoulet Toulouse with duck, sausage, smoked pork, garlic and haricot beans - £7.95*
- Malayan crispy duck's leg with oriental five spices, honey and spring onions - £8.95*
- Grilled fresh sea bass with a warm Andalusian gazpacho sauce - £9.95*

Prices are correct at the time of going to press.

The dishes listed above are a selection from our current menu and are subject to availability. Credit and debit cards are accepted. Reservations for lunch or dinner can be made on 01494 488300. We are closed every Sunday evening and all day Monday.

The Old Plow Bistro/ Restaurant at Speen is situated in Flowers Bottom Lane, halfway between Speen village and the Horses Home of Rest.

OUR YOUNG POETS AND ARTISTS

Children from Speen School have appropriately been studying 'cold climates' during the winter months. Here is some of the work they have produced. AC

Snow - by Nicholas Bacon

Theres snow on the field and cold in the cottage
I sit in the kitchen and eat my porridge.

Snow - by Stephen Harris

Snow is soft and white. Snow is crunchy under your feet when you walk.
Snow is slushy and twinkling when it falls.
Snow is fluffy and icy.
Snow falls and it is silent when it falls
Snow is flakes and cold.
Snow is why children have good fun in the snow.

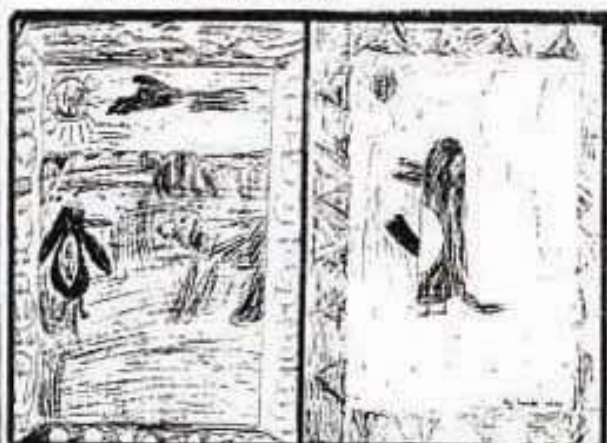
Snow - by Paul Smith

There is icy and white and fluffy soft and cold blanket drift
Flakes and twinkling.

Snow

- by Lewis Tapping

Come in the garden and play in the snow
A snowman we'll make
See how quickly he'll grow.
Give him a hat, stick and pipe.

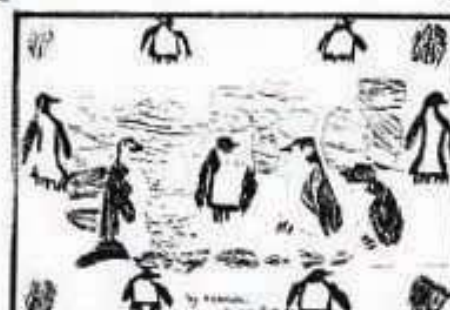


Josie Corrick

Laura Page



Adam Green



Hannah Foulthorpe

MUM SAYS
DON'T FORGET
PTA AUCTION OF
PROMISES. SATURDAY
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VILLAGE HALL.



The penguin who made friends
with a fish --

Once in a lifetime there lived a penguin
he lived by the sea. One day he went down
to catch a fish. The fish he chose was very
clever and didn't mind him. So the fish
played a trick on the penguin. The fish said -
I have lots of treasure and if you let me go
I will give you all my treasure. The fish
said not so fast. I will give you all my treasure
this and agreed to do what the fish said. So the next day
the penguin went down to the sea and to his surprise
there was the little fish on a wiggly stick. The penguin
jumped onto the ice after that the fish started to
move. The penguin got some ropes he started back
to his house. One day there was a little rock
on the door of the penguin's house. The penguin
went to open it. He opened the door and at the top
was the fish. I'm sorry I was mean to you. I will
never do it again. I'm sorry I ate you. The
penguin I tried to eat you is because penguins
like to eat fish so that is why I tried to eat you and you
looked very funny. At I have a good idea that make
friends okay see you tomorrow penguin see you tomorrow
fish. The End

Laura Page



I think there's another
bit somewhere...



SPEEN AND NORTH DEAN NEWS

Local History Section

- Spring 1995 -



Olive goes down Memory Lane

SPEEN WAS A HIVE OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN THE 1920s

Dear Editor,

I have read with interest the Speen and North Dean News and thought that maybe the following might be of interest to your readers, concerning life in Speen during the 1920s:

I was born in 1920 at The Manse in Hampden Road, then known as the Churchway, by local people. My parents were renting this house in between resident ministers for the chapel. We left when I was six months old and then lived in various other houses within the village.

My father worked for Ward Turner the builders, who had premises where the estate called Wayside is now situated.

I wonder how many of your readers will remember the old tailor's shop owned by Roy Stevens, later George Priest's butchers shop? After world war 2 it was taken over by Mr. Syrett and his sons, Dennis and Ron. This was on Chapel Hill, where Spring Cottage is now the entrance to Abbotswood.

Opposite to this was Rose Bank and Harry Ward's builders yard. Miss Emily Saunders had a

little shop in her living room, where we bought newspaper pokes of sweets for a halfpenny. Then up the hill to the Old Dairy from where we fetched our milk every morning and butter on Fridays.

The Old Post Office was where Mr. Ridgley baked his bread and delivered it in a wheelbarrow. These were happy days indeed - and George was still around at 100 years old, delivering telegrams.

In later years, Mr. Martin had Speen Bakery along the road, where he was famous for his dough and lardy cakes.

I attended the old Speen school where Miss Hopton and Miss Smith taught us so admirably. (Strangely enough I returned to work as mid-day supervisor in the new school).

The now Spinners and Weavers was another shop, owned by Mrs. Plumridge, later taken over by her daughter, Elsie, and Elsie's husband Arch Janes (from whom Archway takes its name). Here we bought our 5 aniseed balls and liquorice pipe for a halfpenny on our way to school. Behind here was a workshop where Will Plumridge turned chairlegs for the furniture trade. There were quite a few of these small workshops in the village, including one at Fir View, opposite the Old School and another where the house Studridge now stands and yet another at

Glenwood, near the King William.

I have recollections of falling through the ice on Dell's Pond, as it was known, during one very bad winter. I was rescued by Jack Knight, who lived in No.1. Woodland View - happy memories of childhood days!

I have many stories, far too numerous to write about this time, of events and characters living in our village. I have spent most of my life in Speen, leaving in 1958 and returning in 1968 to live at Montrose in Hampden Road, which my father built looking out on the place of my birth opposite.

My parents were local Bucks people, my mother having been born at the Old Plough, Flowers Bottom and my father coming into the world at the Pink and Lily, where my grandparents were licensees. I hope this may be of interest to your readers, newcomers as well as old ones, writing of happy days in a small self-supporting Chiltern village. Those were days I often think of, as I look out over the Wendover and Halton Hills, from my lounge windows in my new home at Aston Clinton

Good luck with your venture,
**MRS. OLIVE GILBERT (an old
Codgeress)**

*In the centre-spread of this section is a photograph of the old Speen School
taken ten years before Olive was born.*

The King William

When Caroline asked me if I would write an article about "The King William" I was quite delighted because like most people I love my home and I am very proud of it. Much of the history is based on 'hearsay' because the deeds, which we actually have a copy of here, begin around the mid 1800's when Land registry became law. I can write with authority that we are a Grade II listed building and we are the only licenced premises in the locality that is actually listed. One reason for the "Heritage Department" wishing to record this building as historically valuable is the lovely Jacobean Well at the rear of the house. In fact the rear aspect is the more original part.

There was a fierce fire which destroyed the front in the mid 19th century and so the front elevation is a facade. You can see that the two aspects are quite different - one is mostly brick and flint and the other mainly brick. If you visit the William and enter the small room on the left there is a very large oak beam which has quite a significant burn mark on it - according to legend it was this beam that saved the building at the time of the fire and prevented complete devastation. Also in this room, hanging from the ceiling, are four large hooks which apparently are smoking hooks used for curing bacon and meats.

The house we believe was built Circa 1668 by a local builder who apparently built two houses of similar design, ours and the farmhouse called Stocken Farmhouse, at Lacey Green. Both houses were built as farmhouses and in the symmetrical pattern of one tall chimney as a central aspect with rooms built either side. These rooms were all 16 feet square, starting from the cellar and rising up to the attic rooms. The room on the right as you enter the house (the bar restaurant) you will notice is considerably longer than 16 feet. That is due to the fact that in 1981 the barn, which was at the end of the building and acted

as a bottle store, and general store room became an integral part of that room, as a building extension (barn conversion!!).

When "The King William" was a farmhouse, the playing field then belonged to it and was an apple orchard and small home pasture for a dairy herd. Apples were stored in the attic, hoisted up through the Jacobean Well and cider was produced by the owner. Cider was actually sold to the locals and at the time of the licencing act the owner had to register as a cider distributor and hence the farmhouse became a pub.

The two rooms at the rear of the house are our commercial kitchens. They were originally the cowsheds!! Please remember, we have been inspected by Environmental Health regularly.

Our beautiful inglenook fireplaces are original and although there has been, over the years, a temptation to install gas imitations, we have resisted and maintained the logs and coal concept, much appreciated by our customers. The central chimney still has the steps inside where the chimney sweep boys used to climb in the

Built in 1668 as a farmhouse, the King Wm suffered a severe fire in the 19th century, which meant that the front had to be rebuilt.

Victorian Era - a nightmare for our chimney sweep who has to ensure that soot is swept from these ledges. The chimney itself is regarded as one of the tallest in Buckinghamshire. I must confess we have fretted a few times during high winds, hoping that the chimney stack will stand the strain, as our locals say, it's seen 300 years so it will certainly see a few more.

We have in the past been asked about the age of the building and also why there is a lack of obvious beams in the

downstairs rooms. I believe that exposed beams were not fashionable after Elizabethan times, a Historian once told us this fact, but we do have beams upstairs in the top attic rooms (which are extremely pretty). When we renovated the bathroom some years ago, the builder had to "jack" the floor up as it had sunk on one side. As he took up the very rotten floorboards, we could see underneath branches of trees that had been used to provide joists. In between these branches was barley - why barley we all exclaimed? - apparently the grain acted as a form of insulation, needless to say it also attracted mice.

One architecturally interesting point is the brickwork above the windows, which is quite decorative. There is a pattern which resembles an arch shape in the brick. This according to what we have been told, depicts the style and helps to confirm the age of the building.

Do we have a ghost, people often ask? Until we renovated the top attic rooms, there was strong evidence of 'ghost-like' behaviour. An old lady dressed in grey with a scarf around her head, secured under her chin with a large pin, was the description. She was bent over and carried a small purse on her right arm. I certainly saw someone resembling this description and so did one of our regular customers. In fact we discussed it quite openly. One of our local villagers intimated that the description fitted an old lady called Ann Rixon, whose daughter actually was a tenant publican at "The William", years ago.

Until 1972, the "King William Pub" was owned by both Wheelers Brewery and Courages. There was a string of tenants; many were local families such as Hatts, Lovetts, Rixons and finally Bill and Lil Collins who bought the freehold in 1972 and subsequently sold it on in 1980

SANDY

BETTER OFF THAN MANY HUMANS - Gloria talks to John Spurry at the Home of Rest For Horses.

Between Speen and Lacey Green, just where Flowers Bottom Lane meets Slad Lane is the HOME OF REST FOR HORSES. I went along to meet Brigadier John Spurry who is the chief executive of what is a Registered Charity.

What is the history of the Home of Rest for Horses?

The Society's origin goes back to 1886 when a lady who was so concerned about the treatment of the working horses on the streets of London decided something had to be done for their welfare. She got support from like minded people and hired stables in the Acton/Neasden area of London where horses could be taken into care. As the work of this Charity grew new premises had to be found, and over the years there were four changes of location before a farm property known as Speen Farm was acquired and the present stables built and eventually opened in 1971.

I am sure that over the years you have cared for many well known animals, and there are many other stories you could tell of the Home's work?

Yes the history of the Home is packed with anecdotes, its early fundraising activities, it's efforts to get the owners of working animals

to allow sick and lame animals to be taken in for care, its Royal patronage, its war efforts, and so many other things. Over the years of course there have been thousands of horses, ponies and donkeys taken in for care, some have had a higher profile than others in the eyes of the public, but all have received the same love and attention.

One of the well known horses you had at your stables was 'Sefton'?

Yes "Sefton" who was one of the most seriously injured of the horses in the Hyde Park bomb outrage in July 1982 came to us 29th August 1984 when he had been retired and just after his twenty first birthday. He became a TV personality and a great character much loved by all the people young and old who visited Speen Farm. Sadly he died in 1994 and is buried at the R.A.V.C. HQ in Melton Mowbray where he first started his Army service.

Where do most of the animals come from, and how many do you look after?

The maximum number of horses, ponies and donkeys that we can look after at any one time is 120. Nowadays they come from all over the UK. We have some ex working animals from London - the

"totters" horses, a few ex Metropolitan and City of London Police horses, a few ex Army horses, some ponies from Riding for the Disabled and a lot which could be described as "companion" animals. A diverse and ever changing family of animals some who stay for the rest of their lives and some who are in care for a maximum of three months.

Are the stables open to the public?

Yes Westcroft Stables, Speen Farm is open to the public every afternoon except for the last Thursday in July and Christmas Day. BUT ONLY BETWEEN 2pm - 4 pm. The animals are delighted to see visitors especially if they bring sugar lumps, polo mints and chopped up carrots - APPLES ARE NOT ALLOWED. There is no shop, and teas are very rarely served. There is no entrance fee but we hope visitors will leave a donation, in the green pillar box at the stable entrance. There are toilet facilities and many disabled groups enjoy their visit.

Thank you for giving me some information about the HOME OF REST FOR HORSES. There is obviously much more of a story which would interest our readers and when space permits, I hope I can come back to you for a second instalment.

GLORIA HOLMES

113 968 3.099 308 King William the 1st (P.H.) 677 936 1910 Map 1.558 106 2.739

Footnote to an item elsewhere in this section - Memories of North Dean, by Doug and Doris Redrup

We thank Doris and Doug for sharing their memories with us. Doris was born in Bryants Bottom and moved to N. Dean when she was nine. Doug was born in Walters Ash and moved to N. Dean aged two.

Sadly we have to report that Doug's aunt, Mrs Elsie Shaw, who was featured in the last newsletter, has died aged 94 (now at rest in Speen churchyard). We extend our sympathy to her family.

Bridget Lister

1027 98 1.19 1026 828 1218 60 1022 1.918 306 34 102 Baptist Chapel 09862

SPEEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

A YEAR AT KEW through the camera of Peter Brandham.

"Shoot into the light"

The committee were inspired in their choice of speaker for the January meeting. Dr Peter Brandham currently works on the hybridisation of plant species at Kew. But his illustrated talk on this occasion reflected his love of photography and his passion for Kew Gardens.

The slides, taken at every season and over a period of 15 years, were of great quality and beautifully evocative. The accompanying talk was delivered with great enthusiasm and humour.

Peter taught us one basic lesson in photographing vegetation - shoot into the light and not with the sun behind you or to one side, but take care, of course, to tuck the sun behind a fairly solid object such as a tree trunk. The effect of shooting against the light is better modelling and luminosity.

There were several slides of the pyramid-like Princess of Wales conservatory with its various rooms featuring rainforest and desert, etc. It was opened by Princess Diana in 1981. Peter suggested, mischeviously, that possibly Diana did not realise that the conservatory was actually in honour of a different Princess of Wales, Princess Charlotte.

There was also a colourful slide of a large fir tree bedecked in Christmas lights. According to Peter, the public never actually see the lights; they go on when everyone has left in the afternoon and are turned off before anyone arrives next day!

Ed. (in place of Ted who was birdwatching in southern Spain - the avian type, he assures me).

GARDEN OPEN DAYS 1995

Ted Drew advises that TWO OPEN DAYS are envisaged for this summer. The dates suggested are 28th May and 18th June, 2pm to 5pm. One Open Day would cover the area north of Hampden Road and from Hampden Road southward on the other day. Please contact Ted if you wish to be involved.

31st December 1979 was the day when the last commercial loaf was baked in Speen.

I came across this BFP cutting recently at the county library (while we still have a county).

By all accounts, Pete Salmon baked delicious bread, but, naturally, his bakery reflected the commercial potential of a small village. Notwithstanding, the men from the ministry, those bullying bureaucrats, calling themselves environmental health officers, swooped down on Pete and Jennifer, insisting on "improvements" which made their bakery non viable and closure inevitable. What an insult - some of us live in houses which look like that - and we occasionally bake in

them. But don't tell the men in suits or we'll have to live on take-aways!



Village to lose a slice of history

Dan Field reports

Not much to look at from the outside but you wait 'til you taste the bread! Mrs Jennifer Salmon prepares to leave the bakery before a delivery round.

"The modern loaf is just like cotton wool to me but most people have never known anything different. A director of Ranks-Hovis-Walton who tasted my bread said it was just like going back to the old days." These loaves to carry on

ling all that to I know they're back in a and say I had more im-

side-flue oven which is heated by wood fires. But the personal service which Pete and his wife Jennifer provide, certainly

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Memories of North Dean during the twenties, thirties and early forties as recalled by Doug and Doris Redrup.

North Dean children attended three different schools, some went to Naphill, some to Speen and others, like myself, went to Great Hampden. Our school was a small red brick and flint building with two classrooms, one of which was divided by a curtain to make a third classroom.

We walked to school, no luxury cars in those days. On our way we passed gypsies camped by the roadside or on Hampden Common. These people never worried us as we watched them making clothes pegs from hazel sticks and old tin cans, after which they carried them round the cottages, selling them for a penny or twopence a dozen.

The Common was our playground. At school we were encouraged to study birds and trees, and walking to school gave us ample opportunity for this. One year we were honoured to win the RSPB Bird and Tree competition shield and to commemorate this achievement a cedar tree was planted in the Common in front of the school.

Sadly, so many of the birds we knew now seem to have disappeared. Please don't blame the farmer for all this; remember that we can buy packets, tins and bottles of potions at the garden centres, which we then use on our gardens to kill off the natural food for the birds.

Although we walked to school, we were sometimes

lucky to hitch a lift home on the long pole at the end of the horse-drawn timber-bob used for taking trees to Wycombe chair factories.

After school, some of the boys took the cows to graze along the sides of the road or to the Common. This practice would no longer be viable, as in many places the grass verge, which the local roadmen kept trimmed and cut, have all but disappeared.

1927 - 1939

There were not so many houses in this period, as now, but North Dean has still not changed as much as many hamlets since the war.

Wildlife, notably birds, were much more abundant and of greater variety than the present day. As we went to school, we found many nests of all kinds in the roadside hedges. The songbirdators at a reasonable level.

I can remember Mr Turner the farmer, growing oats where Mr Hopkins fir plantation was planted (approximately 1929). I saw these trees planted and then I saw them felled in 1992.

One notable occurrence during this period was the fire which destroyed the farm buildings between Courns View and The Orchard. It started one Saturday morning and it quickly took hold in the

hay-filled barns. The fire brigade came but they

quickly drained the rainwater tank and could then do very little to stop the fire. The mains water was eventually laid on about 1933-4.

A frequent sight in North Dean in the late twenties and early thirties was Lord Graves leading his goats around to find pasture. The locals nick-named him "Bunkum".

We had a good bus service, run at first by the Penn Bus Company, later taken over by the Thames Valley Bus Company. The buses ran about one per hour, the last one leaving Wycombe at 10.25pm, sometimes dropping you off at your gate. The fare was one shilling (5p) return and at Wycombe most of the buses used Frogmore as the terminus. During snowy weather the buses would terminate at Clappins Lane and not attempt the hill.

At Christmas all the children were given a very nice party at the Village Hall and at the end of Father Christmas arrived to give all the children a parcel. One year all the village children were invited to a party by Mr C.V. Troughton at North Dean House. The highlight was hide and seek all over the house.

Traffic in those days was so infrequent that we used to play "tiles" right out in the road outside the council houses in Upper North Dean, and cricket with the wicket chalked on the wall outside the Sportsmans Arms.

Most of the land in middle North Dean was farmed by the Turner family. Lower North Dean was farmed by Mr Troughton, whose manager was a Mr Waterton. Most of the land around Upper North Dean was owned and farmed by Mr Joe Hopkins.

Many local men worked in the chair factories at High Wycombe and bicycles were mainly used as transport. A woodturning business was run by Mr Tom Rogers assisted by his son Charlie.

In the summer, cricket was played most Saturdays. At this time, North Dean had a first reserve side, but needed help from outside the village to support two teams. On one Saturday, two matches were in progress at North Dean, the slips being used for the second pitch. There was also a ladies cricket team whose mainstay was Mrs N. Bunce. The Old House was two cottages at this time. Mr F. Gibbons and his family lived in the section overlooking the cricket field and Mr North and his wife occupied the front part. Prior to the mains water coming, they used a well for their water supply.

The Second World War (1939 - 45)

A number of the young men of the village were called up for military service and a Home Guard unit was formed. To my knowledge, none of the young men who fought lost their lives, but some were wounded. We seemed to

continued on another page...

Learn Devon Before you read this...

SPRING CLEANING DISAISE

Spring-claining, is a disaise same's the malsles, or the mumps, or this-yer Timothy-titus or pennysitus or whatever 'tis called. And when a wumman shows the fus' signs of it her ought to be took straight away to the sallytorian until the fit have passed away. Wumman what have got the sping-clain fever shuld be shut up till they comes back to their sainses; where they wude'n be 'lowed to zee a bit o' carpet ner a cubberd ner a piece o'furniture 'pon no account. 'Specially the carpet fur her'll rip 'en up, zac'y same as if it had done her some injury. Her's delighted when her hears the ripping and tearing as the calves be to hear the clatter o' the bucket. 'Tis music to the years of her. When her zees the dist and smeech fulling up the houze 'nuff to stifle a dead cat it putts more joy in her heart than a quart o' zider do to a harvester. Then her'll hang up thik poor carpet what never done her a minute's harm ever since 'twas a carpet, her'll hang 'en up across the line and her'll let into 'en with your best walking-stick, vore-stroke and back till her've broke the stick all abroad to matches and beat the carpet that thin, you can zee the time through 'en by the church clock. Her'll do more injury to thik carpet in half-a-nower than you wude in half-a-year of ordnery wear an' tear.

Nex' thing her do's is to try and zee how many things her can stand up, one on top the tother in the landing at the head o' the stairs, without the whole lot falling

down over. Her'll start with a box stood 'pon one end, then the head o' the bed lied flat, a couple o' chairs, the dressing table with the legs sticked up in the air; atop that a waish-basin and jug and severl other coamen articles, a picsher or two, a vew cannle-sticks and ornaments, a couple o' veather pillers, half a dizzen books, and on top o' the whole lot her'll stick the looking-glass.

Well, and by this time her've discovered the duster which her wants to use next is in under the bottom box, and so her attemp's to take it out without upsetting what used to be called the Equal Abrahm. Her haives up one corner o' the box and expects all the rest o' the things to bide as they be; and when the whole box o' tricks comes down on her haid her looks surprised.

Mind yer, when yer cometh home her'll declare 'twas all your fau't becus you fergot the bar o'yaller zoap and two-pennerd o' nails which her told 'ee to take back las' Vridy.

Tid'n a scrap o'gude to ax what difference 'twude a-made 'cos you might all-so-well read the ten commandments to a rin-away hoss as arg' with a wumman when her's spring-claining. Very likely her've scat the waish-basin all abroad to shords, and knacked off severl hannels of things, but her waun' matter that in the laist so-long as her have'n broke the looking-glass, which wude a-meant zeb'm years bad luck.

'Tis wonderful how the women do love a change, never mind if 'tis only a change fer the worst. That's the rale raison why her

have's spring-claining once a year. 'Tid'n becus the place is durty. Not a bit of it, 'cus her've bin rubbing to it and scrubbing to it all the year round; so it stands to raison it can't be in the condition her tries to make out. All this-yer old rigmarole about the durt and the much and sitch-like, is only excuse 'cus her wants to turn the bed with the head around tother way and putt the waish-stand where the chest o'drawers use to be. An' the next' time you goes in the rume in the dark, thinking you'm gwain to walk straight across same's usual you fetches yer foot a whack up again the legs o' a taable which use to be auver agin the winder and makes yer toes crack again. And then they wonders that a man says things which he did'n ought to.

Spring-claining 'tis only ole supersition, which have been handed down from time in memorium; that when a certin time o' the year cometh around, everything inzide the houze capable to being moved have got to be moved, took up, turned tap-an-tail, twisted in-an-out, slattered all auver with watter, knacked with a hammer, hat with a stick, carr'd out and give two kicks and a shake, carr'd in and sot down to a differnt place to where it was took up; so that everybody what wants it shan't know where to look fer it, and they what don't want it shall fall auver it.

Be warned!

BRIDGET LISTER

Our first contribution which defied editing, Ed!

So that's how they speak in North Dean?!

be under the main flight path of the German bombers used in their frequent raids on the Midlands. I remember the night they bombed Coventry. German planes were going overhead from dusk til dawn, the last going

back around 6am. The Germans used a radio beam for direction finding and when we turned on our radios we picked up a monotonous warbling

sound. However, North Dean escaped bomb damage, the nearest bombs being oil bombs being dropped near Spring Wood in 1939. Also a

Mosquito aircraft crashed up Piggotts Hill.

*Doug and
Doris Redrup*

North Dean Memories - continued

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SCHOOL LIFE WAS NOT EASY IN 1876 - and the Inspector didn't help! So reveals Emma Billson's School Log.

1876

14 Feb. Today I was appointed as sole mistress to Speen School which has 60 scholars, age 5 to 12 years. I find most of the children backward in arithmetic and the First Class very back-ward in grammar and geography.

18 Mar. Attendance average only 43 this week.

10 May. Albert Ward, one of the infants, met with an accident by being drowned in a pond adjoining their house.

30 May. Summary of Inspector's Report. The school is at present in a deplorable state of inefficiency. It has suffered from constant change of teachers. The present mistress is likely to stay, so the prospects for the school are fair for the future. The infants have been entirely neglected - they know absolutely nothing. The school room is very dirty, one window is broken and a pane in another is cracked. The firestove is almost, if not quite, worn out. The grant is reduced by one tenth for defective instruction, especially in arithmetic. (Article 32 (B)). The grant under Article 19(B) is also withheld as the infants have not been satisfactorily taught. A more serious deduction might have been incurred but from the fact that the school is now inspected for Grant for the first time and there have been two changes of teachers. Defects in premises must be remedied without delay. Emma J. Billson, Provisionally Certified Teacher.

1 Jul. A measles epidemic has reduced attendance to only 25.

1877

29 May. Inspector's Report: The infants have improved greatly, so has the school generally. Miss Billson has really worked hard and thoroughly deserves a word of commendation.

10 Jul. Average attendance last week 62, very good

14 Dec. I received permission to close the school a week early so that I may attend the Certificate Examination.

1878

1 Apr. Prudence Turner (14) and Emily Chilton (14) commenced duties as mistresses.

4 Apr. Attendance very low as families attended the races at Lodge Hill.

8 Apr. There is an outbreak of Scarletina in the village.

3 May. The inspector came last month and his report is: The results of the examination do not show the improvement I expected to find. The First Standard and most of the Standards generally are backward in Arithmetic, and the Handwriting is not on a par with the Spelling which is good. Better results in Arithmetic will be looked for next year. The supply of desks appears to be insufficient. The scholar for whom the Honour Certificate is claimed does not satisfy the requirements of the regulations of 9th February 1877.

27 Jun. I taught them the words of the song: Wavelets are Gleaming, instead of Tables.

19 Jul. Whooping Cough affecting attendance.

29 Jul. Attendance small today being Feast Day at the Temperance Hall.

10 Sep. I closed the school today as it was the day of Choir Picnic.

1879

27 May. Inspector's Report: The school is doing rather better on the whole. The Arithmetic is still indifferent, the Writing poor the Spelling is good.

14 Jul. Gave half holiday in the afternoon owing to it being Sunday School Anniversary of the Chapel in the village.

11 Aug. Attendance extremely poor this morning owing to it being treat day at the Temperance Hall for the Sunday School Scholars. Opened school in the afternoon but only 12 children came.

12 Aug. Scarlet Fever is again cutting attendance to only 37. The Rev. W.J. Burger brought a bottle of Condy's Fluid to disinfect the school premises.

15 Aug. On medical authority I closed the school.

6 Oct. School re-opened today after Scarlet Fever being prevalent in the Village.

1880

24 May. Inspector's Report: There is some improvement I am glad to find in the work of this school. It has been worked under difficulties, in fact, it was closed down seven weeks owing to Scarlet Fever. The Infants want further attention generally. Their sewing specimens were rather indifferently done.

1881

12 Jan. Very deep snow, attendance down to 48.

With permission of the Headmistress, Denise Nayna, here is an extract from the Speen School Log Book. The Mistress in charge was Emma Jane Billson who was required by the 1862 Education Act to write a log and to keep a register of pupils admitted and those leaving.

The Log Book also has the Inspector's Reports carried out in the spring. Unlike today's inspections, the pupils were examined against STANDARDS.

Scholars could progress from Standard 1 (Simple arithmetic and reading) up to Standard VII (fractions, decimals and simple interest). Those over the age of 10 could leave school if they passed Standard V. (Researcher's note - The National Curriculum of 1880? had the wheel come full circle in 1990?)

Schools were funded from three sources: Subscriptions by parishioners, School Pence collected weekly from the children, and Grants from the

government. The School Pence rate was 1 pence, less if more than two from a family, and more, 2 pence, if the parents were well off, eg. employers.

The Inspectors could withhold the grant or reduce it for inefficiencies, see the examples,

Speen School was built about 1860 from an endowment trust from Mrs. Grace, a parishioner of St. John's Lacey Green Church of England.

Bob Johnston

18 Jan. Severe snow storm, I was unable to keep the school open.

28 Jan. Attendance only 28.

25 Feb. Attendance recovered to an average of 57.

17 May. Inspector's Report. In the upper Division the Spelling is bad and the Reading is very moderate, but the Arithmetic is good. The School is attended by a great many Infants. Of 14 (age 6) examined, only six could form their letters, five add, and four subtracted easy numbers. This is not creditable. The Grant suffers a deduction on one tenth for the defective attainments of the Infants generally, and for the failure in Writing under the Standard. (Article 32 (B)). Payments under Article 19(B) (1a) will not be renewed unless the Infants are better instructed.

10 Jun. Many children helping parents haymaking, attendance only 21.

11 Jul. Attendance small this morning and closed school this afternoon for Sunday

School Anniversary.

13 Jul. Attendance small as there was a tea at the Temperance Hall.

5 Aug. I was presented, this afternoon, by Emily Chilton and Bertha Turner, on behalf of the Scholars and Friends, with a beautiful photographic album, a small token of esteem with kind love and best wishes.

12 Aug. Emma J. Billson resigned. (To an unknown destination. R.P.J.)

14 Sep. Ellen Maria King took charge of Speen School after the Harvest Holiday, with 48 pupils.

28 Oct. Diocesan Inspector's Report: Miss King has only been here a few weeks. She will have plenty to do in encouraging the children to be more responsive, and in getting them out of the habit of whispering their answers. More hymns too will be taught and Private Prayers also. The Writing of the upper school children was good. Edward Barker, General Inspector for the Diocese of Oxford

I would also acknowledge the help given by John Tison, a local historian, a specialist in vernacular building, furniture and crafts. His advertisement elsewhere for his publications.

Postscript: Emily Chilton married John Ward age 30 in Lacey Green Church on 17th December 1887. John was a local Speen boy, one of the children of Cornelius Ward a carpenter for decades in Speen. Sincere thanks to Christine Longman, The Old School House, for the loan of the 1910 Photograph, and also to Denise Nayna and her staff.

Bob Johnston, Abbotwood.



Speen School 1910

Winter-Taylors

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Tessa Ridda: Valley Cottage, Highwood Bottom,
Speen, Bucks. HP17 0PE

HOW THE OLD CODGER 'SAVED' NORTH DEAN

Or would have done if he'd been old enough!

Reading Gordon's account of life in the Home Guard, reminded me that we also had a thriving Home Guard at North Dean, I was too young to join, but was allowed to tag along for some of their activities. Sunday morning was a highlight of the week, when rifle target practice took place in the field we knew as the downs, not too far away. In the early weeks, many a target was recovered still in pristine condition.

As time went on, more holes began to appear in the targets, and a kitty was introduced each week with the best score taking the pot. I considered myself to be a marksman, and one morning I was allowed to have a go, being staked by Arthur Smith, who became my friend for life. My ego was slightly dented when recovering my target I found it to be one of those still in pristine condition. Over the following weeks, I did manage to put a few holes in my targets, but never won the pot for my sponsor.

When the signals section was formed, I became good friends with the Officer in charge and offered to help by carrying the flags. Yes, high technology had arrived in North Dean; men were sent to all the high points in the area armed with a pair of flags, and soon messages were being flashed from one point to the other. I sometimes thought it would be quicker if I ran across the valley

with the message. At the end of the evening, when the messages were checked, many a laugh was had, as the messages received bore little resemblance to those sent! After weeks of hard work the Unit became quite proficient, but the flags were soon replaced with more modern equipment.

Came the day when it was decided that the Company should become skilled in the art of house-to-house fighting, the cottages next to the Sportsmans Arms were chosen for this exercise. The occupants were asked to vacate the houses for a few hours. The enemy was installed in the upstairs rooms, then with blackened faces and much shouting our gallant boys rushed into the houses, opening the doors with a crash of hobnailed boots and finally emerging with their 'prisoners', to the applause of the watching Villagers.

A road block was put in place at the bottom of 'Taffy' Hatt's garden with an arc of fire that would take on any enemy tanks or men appearing round the corner by Longwood. The bottom end of the Village were not too happy about this, as they could only watch the tanks trundle by. However, this problem was addressed when North Dean House became the Headquarters of the local Home Guard.

We too had an aircraft crash on the Village, narrowly missing



the bungalows Wycombe side of Clappins Lane. The Home Guard came second this time, as first on the scene was Charlie Rogers our Village Air Raid Warden. Sadly, we could do nothing for the two aircrew who died in the crash.

On a more cheerful note, an airman from a damaged aircraft parachuted down into the woods next to Clappins Lane, and after walking down into the Village, was given tea and biscuits while he waited for transport to pick him up. In return, he told us, 'off the record', where he had buried his parachute. After much searching we found the chute and the ladies were able to find many uses for the silk panels. The lads made use of the miles of nylon cord and I still had some until quite recently.

The Home Guard at North Dean went from strength to strength over the years until the final stand down in late 1944.

by THE OLD CODGER.

One day we'll learn the identity of this mysterious person! Ed.

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The killing fields of Highwood Bottom >

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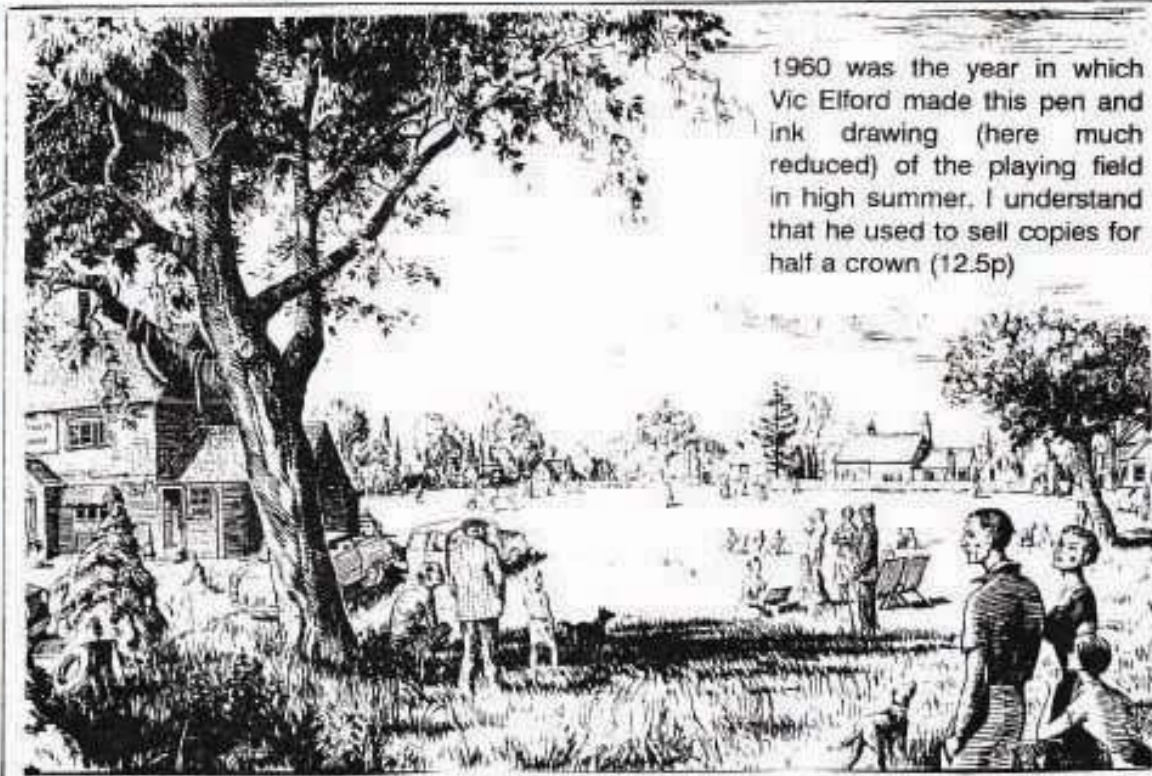
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Those good old days.....



1960 was the year in which Vic Elford made this pen and ink drawing (here much reduced) of the playing field in high summer. I understand that he used to sell copies for half a crown (12.5p)

..... When Jacqueline was Queen of The Fete

(Thanks to Don White for the sketch and prog.)

2.45 COURT OF FETE QUEEN

(Miss Jacqueline Lowes)

*and judging of Children's Fancy Dress
and judging of Children's Decorated Bicycle.*

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*'Mike Caudery' and his campfire
songs.*



Speen had not held a fete for several years, when, in 1960, there was an urgent need to do so in order to raise the £80 needed to repair a leaky village hall roof. In the event there was a profit of £109. This was a good sum for those days.

History records that a certain Miss Jacqueline Lowes was crowned Fete Queen. She later married her King - David and went to live in the nearby principality of Risborough, but Jacqueline has also stayed loyal to Speen for all the three and a half decades which have passed since that memorable June day of her youth.

I hope it didn't rain on her reign and that Jacqueline and her subjects were able to party til midnight - as it promises in the programme - to the sounds of Mike Caudery and his campfire songs.

HIGHWOOD BOTTOM - "A secret Lane" where Mr. Cooper met summary justice.

Highwood Bottom - a steep-sided little valley on the western fringe of Speen, somehow evokes another age. A handful of old cottages sprawl along the valley floor, each with vegetables and flowers in season. There are sheep grazing, chickens clucking and an ancient donkey lives in gentle retirement. The steep eastern slope is slowly but surely turning from thorn scrub into forest. An old wood beyond the last cottage is home to a large badger colony. Thereafter the lane makes a stony ascent, past a mysterious old farmhouse and on towards Lacey Green on the ridge beyond.

Here is how some of the folk who live in Highwood Bottom talk about it:

When the owners were away, the mice did play - in BOTTOM COTTAGE.

Roger and Rosemary and their son Dominic live at Bottom Cottage, Highwood Bottom, with their large and boisterous Airedale. Roger and Rosemary fell in love with Highwood Bottom almost twenty years ago when, while flicking through Country Life at the dentist's, they saw Bottom Cottage advertised.

They needed to move from their tiny cottage which opened straight onto the road and had only a small garden shared with five other houses, as Dominic would soon be walking and needed somewhere to play. It sounded too good to be true. The price was very reasonable even though, at that time, house prices were climbing daily.

When they came to see Bottom Cottage on a beautiful June day, Roger and Rosemary loved the 'secret' lane, the countryside around the garden, and the flint and brick house looked perfect. However, Rosemary's heart sank as the door opened - it was certainly "in need of renovation"! An army of mice moved in during the week, while

the owners were in London. There were holes in the doors and the ceiling was thickly covered in soot. Roger, "thank goodness" says Rosemary, could see beyond all that and persuaded his wife that it would soon be put to rights. To their great relief, none of the many others who looked round the cottage had Roger's foresight and so it was their own offer that was accepted.

They learnt that the house was built in about 1720 by the family of the infamous highwayman, John Cooper. Therefore, when it was extended, in 1978, there was much excitement in case buried treasure should be discovered during excavations. Alas, no such luck, even though the digger driver was hawk-eyed as each bucketful of earth was moved. Incidentally, the newest part of the cottage has caused people to stop in the lane and muse "Was it a chapel?"

Keen gardeners and lovers of the countryside, Rosemary and Roger's pond is a haven for a multitude of wildlife. They later bought a strip of the adjoining hillside to enable them to have a

"wild part", vegetable plot and somewhere to park the car. Their environmental interests were furthered when they were able to buy about an acre of neighbouring farmland, a few years ago, to fulfil a cherished dream of planting a small wood. There are about eighteen species of Chiltern trees and shrubs which are now growing well, despite a shaky start with two drought years - "eternal thanks for the use of the Turnip End Cottage hose", says Rosemary, "ten minutes per tree or they'll turn their roots up, according to the Chiltern Society's experts." Sweep's Copse trees and shrubs have now grown large enough to begin to make a contribution to the landscape. Why Sweep's Copse? Well it was once part of John West's field named Chimney Sweeps, because the local chimney sweep, Mr. Hickman, lived at Turnip End just by that very field.

Highwood Bottom is still a joy to the family, rain or shine, visitors laugh at being reminded when invited to lunch "don't forget your wellies!"



HIGHWOOD BOTTOM

BRYN COTTAGE

House deeds make interesting reading and give your house a sense of history. Our house originates in the 17th century, as did most in Highwood Bottom.

However, the earliest deeds we have are from 1912. The mortgage was then £100 and was financed by the vendor! Clearly repayment was a big problem then as now, because when the house was resold 8 years later, only the interest (at 4% per annum) had been paid, contrary to the conditions written into the mortgage.

The deeds describe the property as 'abutting upon the High Road leading from Speen to Lacey Green', sounding rather different to the quiet unmade track

enjoyed by resident and rambler today. The house changed hands frequently in the first half of this century, with several notable people owning or renting it at various times. For instance, the artist Cecil Collins holidayed here in 1930: we know this from photographs of the artist in a book which also features a painting he made of our living room. While modernist in style, the room is quite recognisable as it is today, including the inglenook fireplace and the original tile floor.

At that time the house was called Monk cottage, presumably because it was owned by a William Monk (we don't know where the current name comes from and its allusion to a Welsh hillside).

Monk sold the house to another famous name, the actor

Anthony Quayle, who owned it for five years from 1938. We believe he was responsible for some of the "modernisation", including a bathroom. This still features the original and extraordinarily large bath (you can lie full length in it!) Whether Mrs Quayle was particularly fond of baths or was a woman of stature is not clear, (*maybe a two-at-a-time bath? Ed.*) but it did require an enlarged well to supply the bath. Regrettably the well was filled in for a subsequent extension, but we would have enjoyed the facility for watering the garden.

Talking of water, at the moment, early February, our "high road" is more a gurgling brook than a road, so perhaps it did remind someone of Wales after all. **JEREMY AND PAULINE HALL**

BEN'S STORY CONTINUES...

My brother Francis was born in 1935. I was born three years later. I still have the blue embroidered pinafores that we wore as everyday dress and I have photographs of us running freely in the garden and forever eating apples. One of the many varieties was called Curl Tail. The old tree died last year but now it is 'alive' again hosting a rambling rose. (Speen was then full of orchards that have now sadly disappeared). We seemed to live outside amongst the abundant piles of fruit and with the wasps and nettles and butterflies.

Sometimes, when my mother and father had to leave us at home while they gave concerts, an entire family would come down from the village. A baby sitter would not venture alone down the lane for fear of meeting the ghost of the highway man. He was called Cooper and legend has it that he was hanged and buried in the corner of our wood.

Also frightening was hearing the flying bomb that landed in Hampden and seeing the sky lit up from London as it was blitzed. Before my father was posted to Wales he was part of the local home guard. One day they dug a hole, as a hide out, on Parslow's bank. The indent is still evident!

I first went to school at Piggotts when I was three years old, sometimes walking all the way, taking my soup in a blue enamel lidded can. I remember being with the grandchildren of Eric Gill and "Aunty" May, our teacher, whose lessons were interrupted by the squealing pigs being killed.

When I was eight my aunt Elizabeth, a painter from Florence, came to stay at Valley Cottage. This was a very important time for me. We used to paint landscapes together and she gave me the oil paint box which I still use. She also painted portraits of the local



children and I remember William Bennett, who is now a famous flautist, reluctantly posing as he played his flute. From now on I never stopped painting and I sold my first picture for five pounds, (a fortune!), to the violinist Eric Gruenberg.

When I was nine I left the village school to go to Christ's Hospital and the unfamiliar environment of a boarding school. The boys wore strange long blue black cloaks, breeches and yellow stockings. I was lucky to have an inspiring and original art teacher. Her name was Nell Todd and her pupils made her speech day hats crowded with fantasy, and birds nests like Edward Lear poems.

continued on another page...

...Ben

Chickens lived in the art room and as a punishment we had to collect cow pats and so her flower garden flourished.

From school I went to the Slade, for four years, until 1960 I held my first exhibition that year at Harrow and showed a portrait of Chloe Ashcroft. As a result I had my first commission to paint a portrait, a young girl of fourteen. Her name was Tessa. We met again when I was teaching at the Wycombe College of Art. She went on to study ceramics at the Central School of Art and design and we married in 1964. We have two children, Tobias who was born in 1967 and Tabitha three years later. Both were at Speen school

and continued their education in High Wycombe, then went on to Bristol university. Like myself, both loved the freedom and space of the valley when they were children.

In 1970 I built my studio and gallery (this took me a year) and I began my work as a portrait painter. In 1983 I was commissioned by the Fishmongers' Hall to paint The Prince of Wales. I had six sittings at Kensington palace. Sometimes Lady Diana sat and chatted, and after each sitting I remained to work on the uniform (it was the full dress naval uniform that he was married in). This was brought to me on a dressmaker's dummy and I was

able to look in detail at the priceless medals, one dating back to the time of William the Conqueror.

Speen pottery was opened ten years ago. Tessa makes decorated earthenware pottery. This has a fine finish unlike the traditional stoneware that people are more familiar with. In her showroom you can see her wide range of tableware and examples of her commemorative plates and bowls that are made on commission. Last year we held our 12th biennial exhibition of pottery and paintings at Valley Cottage.

BEN RUBBRA



Valley Cottage has been the Rubbra family home and studios for sixty years.



Highwood Bottom seen from Roger's new wood. Bottom Cottage to the right. Bryn Cottage is mostly hidden behind trees on the left.

End of local history section

NEWS FROM SPEEN SCHOOL

Year 3 pupils will be performing at Wycombe Swan on April 6th. They will be taking part in "Energize '95", a schools' production co-ordinated by the County Education Department. The children will be among 800 pupils performing "The Selfish Giant".

The School's Parent Teacher Association has three exciting events in the pipeline and everyone in the village is invited to attend.

The 'Auction of Promises' will take place at Speen Village Hall on Saturday April 1st. Dave Evans is the auctioneer - and there's bound to be something of interest to everyone. Admission is £3, which includes a catalogue, ploughman's supper and a glass of wine.

Back by popular demand in June is the Caribbean Night. The evening will take place in a marquee in the school grounds with a live steel band. Included in the ticket price of £12.50 is hot food and authentic Caribbean dishes! The date for your diary is Saturday June 17th at 8 pm.

On the night before the Caribbean Night, (Friday June 16th) the PTA is organising a children's disco in the marquee. All children aged between 5 - 10 are welcome. The disco will start at 5pm and finish at 7pm. Tickets are £2.50 to include refreshments.

Tickets for all these events are available from Alice Corrick (01494 565380) or Amanda Bacon (01494 562166). Reserve your tickets early as the last two Caribbean Nights have been a complete sell-out. All proceeds will go to the school.

AMANDA CLEAVER

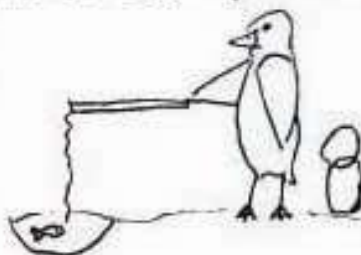
Sally and I

One chilly night my mother was expecting a baby (The baby was me) My mother is a polar bear I'm a cub my friend is the penguin. My name is Turkey the penguin's name is called Sally. We always play together. One day my mother said to me "go and play with Sally" "no I will not" "why not" "because..." because AAAA... Then we went out and ran and ran and ran until we could not stand no longer. But when we sat down in a trap we were up in a tree in a net. Help help help my mother came rushing up and said "stop people Sally and I" still our eyes. The next thing we knew was that we were in bed. My mother said to me

"you had a little fright" "did I" "yes you did and your shouting like mad" "oh where's Sally" "she's at her home. She had a fright like you" "oh can we go and see her" "no" just then Sally came through the door "Sally" I shouted "don't shout I'm OK" "I can see that" "can you come and play with me" "yes I can" "ok then come on" "ok I'm just coming" "don't go out of sight of the cave" said mother "ok" "ok come on" "ok I'm coming" then we played and played and played until midnight then we slept in the grass in the moonlight.

Josie Corrick

The End



Baniella

The Radburns are alive and well - settling in on Canvey Island

A LETTER FROM RACHEL AND CHARLIE

Hello from Canvey Island. We have now been here just about a month and are finally beginning to settle down, but boxes still occupy a large part of our lives.

We are very happy here and so busy that the days are just flying by, and we don't have enough time to sleep! (and when we do we have Anna!)

The people who live on Canvey appear to be a breed apart, a bit like in the old days when everyone knew everyone else. You can't walk down the street without stopping to chat (it's a bit like the old village mentality but with a population of 35,338!!) it is completely unique and even places just off the Island think it weird and it is a bit strange really and takes some getting used to.

The church is of much the same ilk (esp. the strange bit!) but we feel very welcomed and loved by the members some of whom are great comedians! One day I will learn when they are being serious and when not, but for the moment I believe everything and they love it!

And now some family bits. Charlie is having a great time preparing services (he starts at 5.30 am when Josh gets up!) and is enjoying his 'new' role of encourager. There are many organisations in the Church all of which have very able leaders so Charlie is able to support in different ways to that in which his previous rural ministries have required, it is good to have a change every now and then.

Rachel is joining with two of the other youth leaders (one has a baby boy a week younger than Anna) in resurrecting a group for the Christian teenagers and is attending the womens meetings, mums and toddlers, and the music group in the church (as well as

typing sermon notes, worksheets, surveys, letter and so on!) and spending the rest of my life in the pool with the littles!

Joshua continues to be a very sociable if very loud! little boy and has settled down very well to the changes. He has two mornings at playgroup and has made several friends already. The teachers think he's "magic"! (I can think of other words!) The Mother and Toddler groups here, because of lack of playgroup places, go up to school age, so we are getting involved there too. We also have a mums and child swimming lesson weekly, and he goes to a group for 3-5 year olds, where they do exercises, play games and sport and then we swim as a family afterwards. Unfortunately his allergy problems continue and have become severe again, so we are exploring new avenues for dealing with this (He's seeing a paediatrician on 1st February,) but on the whole he is doing very well and is brilliant.

And to the littlest, Anna too continues to be a great joy (except at night!) and her little character is beginning to form. She is a little but "mumsy" at the moment which is a bit of a pain but fortunately the other people she seems to feel confident with, we see a fair bit of, so we do get a break every so often. Very occasionally she sleeps 6 hours in a row, but this is rare and getting rarer! She is a chunky little thing and weights 19lb (not fat, well covered says the Health Visitor) but she is lovely and healthy and doesn't have any of Josh's food problems. She has just passed her 7 month check with flying colours.

And Charlie writes: It was difficult to even consider leaving Speen at first, but now we find ourselves at Canvey Island and despite earlier hesitations have discovered a very happy life here.

The church is situated at the

far end of the Island at "Leigh Beck" and has been witnessing for 92 years. With 50 members today it is now able, with Home Mission help, to support a ministry full time. We are very pleased to belong to a very welcoming congregation here at Canvey, and our prayers continue with the work at Speen.

CHARLIE, RACHEL, JOSHUA AND ANNA

A LETTER FROM OUR TREASURER

Dear readers,

I hope that you have all read and enjoyed the first four issues of your newsletter.

From the kind comments received, it would seem we all wish it to continue. Therefore let me say how the Speen and North Dean News survived financially during its first year -

The production costs were met by a couple of 'one-off' local authority grants, advertising, one fund-raising event and some small donations. At the end of this first year we have broken even!

However, some proactive thought is called for to ensure that we can continue to enjoy our village newsletter. Our advertisers are giving active support, but that will not be enough, so although we have some ideas for fund-raising events in the future, **in order to sustain a quarterly publication we need your help!! A small donation would greatly assist and so, if you are in agreement an amount of £2 per household has been suggested.** This figure is purely a guide, but it would certainly help.

We would hope to call on households around late June, when we plan to be delivering the summer issue, but where it is more convenient for you, you could send your donation to me at 'Ashton', Studridge Lane, Speen.

Thank you for your support.

CAROLINE PARTRIDGE

...LETTERS

Dear Editor

This Speen couple were burgled twice within four weeks

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Steve and I enjoy living in Speen. It is a village that offers a beautiful respite from the day to day pressures of everyday life. But it is that very need for escape, combined with work and other commitments that can lead to a degree of isolation as we are unable to take part in many of the village activities.

At the end of last year we became the victims of 2 burglaries within 4 weeks of each other. (At the same time that one of the burglaries was taking place our car was broken into in Leicester). Having spent four complacent years living 'undisturbed' in Speen, this naturally came as quite a shock. Naively, it had never occurred to me that we could become a victim.

I personally believe in the value of a strong community spirit but am guilty of allowing time, or rather the lack of it, to be my excuse for not getting involved. It has taken the double invasion of my home to make me stop and consider what that involvement could be.

I now admit to having a vested interest in establishing a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Speen. Our local policeman, Brian Price, referred me to Ian Richards, the Community Liaison Officer for the Thames Valley Police. He has advised me that I need to find out if there is enough interest in the village to make it work. I would like to use this newsletter to ask villagers if they want Neighbourhood Watch.

All I would like people to do is to drop a note to yourself or me saying yes or no. If there is enough interest, we can invite Ian to talk to us and to help us launch the scheme and hopefully make this village a much harder target for criminals.

Jackie Newman



I recalled seeing a Neighbourhood Watch sign at the entrance to Abbotswood and, discovering that its coordinator was a Mr John Radford, I gave him a phone call. John informed me that it is best to organise on a one street basis (not village-wide, as Jackie presumed). This is further sub-divided into groups of six houses. However, if any adjoining streets find they each have a Neighbourhood Watch, then it makes sense for them to combine, says John. John then kindly offered to contact Jackie and so I left it there. This subject of security is something worth discussing and this newsletter would be happy to carry any information or debate that may emerge.

Ed.

PC BRIAN PRICE CAME TO SEE US

The police applaud Neighbourhood Watch schemes, says Speen's beat bobby Brian Price. They reduce crime and they bring people together doing what neighbours should be doing, watching out for one another. There is a problem, says Brian, in roads where practically everyone is out during working hours and that is when the houses are most vulnerable; very few break-ins occur (thank goodness) when the residents are at home. Actually, according to Brian, Speen is a very light crime area indeed. However there was, he admits, a spate of break-ins here in the period before last Christmas. These were mainly carried out, the police believe, by a known individual. The matter concerning him is currently being dealt with, is all that Brian could report at this time.

We found Brian easy to converse with and from next issue we hope to start a regular series of contributions from him. Meanwhile, if anyone has something they need to discuss with Brian there is a direct line through which he can quickly be contacted. It is 0296 396093. If the phone is not being manned when you call, don't be put off, leave a message on the answerphone.

Ed.

"SPEEN? - NEVER HEARD OF IT"

By **Alan Wright**, a "new arrival".

"Can you direct me to Speen?"

"Where?" she said.

"Speen" I replied "S P E E N".

"Never heard of it."

As it turned out, it was only 3 miles from where we were standing, but for all she knew, it was not on the map.

Of course we all live there so we know where it is and I know that the Inland Revenue know precisely where it is, but if you are travelling from anywhere to anywhere, you have no reason to pass through it. Now that is a very good reason for us inhabitants old and new; it's off the beaten track and away from the hordes.

Having spent the last 40 years

in Canada, we also had not heard of Speen until during our last holiday Elizabeth read in the local paper about a lady who had moved from Connecticut, a state in the USA with lovely countryside similar to England, to a small village called Speen. A few lucky breaks and an encounter with Margaret and David Evans and we were house owners.

Neither of us have ever lived in a village environment before; we have always been in or close to a big city, where it can be rather cold and uninviting, so you can imagine how delighted we were to have found such a lovely village with so many caring people. In my particular case, circumstances were such that a little support

would help and that is what I received, lots of it and from all directions. Now that our tenure has almost reached the 6 months mark, we have had time to meet many villagers, attend some functions and notice that the caring shows up in so many places; it's amazing what a kind word and a visit can do for you when you are low.

Something else has come to our notice in the village - flints and lumps of clay. Now I am sure that the good Lord had a reason for having flints and lumps of clay, but why are they all in our garden?

We just hope that sometime in the near future, we may have the opportunity of repaying some of Speen's generosity.

THERE IS A SPIRIT OF KINDNESS HERE

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

It is good to know that an excellent spirit of kindness exists in our community. Over the past few weeks a number of people have been in difficult circumstances, especially needing transport for medical appointments, and volunteers in the village have readily come forward. Newcomers to the village have been welcomed

with kindness and there has been help for people unable to get to shops etc.

Elderly folk have received support from all sections of the community, with young people bringing in fuel during cold spells, tasty meals prepared and companionship given for the homebound and lonely, and many other examples of care.

The Speen and North Dean Good Neighbours group of

volunteers are available to help with such things as transport and shopping etc, in an emergency, so if in need please contact one of the people listed below:

Margaret Jones 488246

Poppy Ellis 488548

Doris Wilson 488334

The tea and chat group met on 24th February and they hope to continue with these friendly gatherings

GLORIA HOLMES

SPEEN'S BIRDS IN THE SPRINGTIME

...Listen to them says Roger Hussey.

About thirty years ago I joined an evening class studying birds, their behaviour and identification. The tutor, Ken Williamson from the British Trust for Ornithology, had a theory about bird song and how to use it to census bird populations and breeding success.

Mr. Williamson used members

of the class to try out his ideas. His methods are now used all over the world, and a few of us are still using them to do an annual bird count in this area. The trouble is that some of us are losing our hearing. We need some younger ears to learn this most interesting and rewarding work - how about it,

some of you??

Last year I watched someone trimming his hedge. He left a nest hanging down, the young birds fell out, whereupon he promptly plonked them back in and pushed the nest back in place! I wonder if they survived??

ROGER HUSSEY.

NORTH DEAN VILLAGE HALL IS LOOKING GOOD

Life at the Village Hall has been fairly quiet since Christmas, but one event that did take place was the 60 plus Party. Much hard work was put in by the Hall Committee in preparing the food and making the tables look inviting. The guests were met with a glass of sherry, and enjoyed a chat before lunch was served.

Two of our regular invited guests were not with us this year, John Eastgate who has now retired, and Charlie Radburn who has moved from the district, our best wishes to them both.

After an enjoyable meal, we were entertained by a group of ladies calling themselves 'Bottom of the Barrel'; suffering the loss of their pianist and lead singer at the last minute, they carried on like real troupers, and gave a very enthusiastic and enjoyable

performance.

Everyone who came this year enjoyed themselves, if you are over 60 why not join us next year.

Looking to the future, you will find a list of forthcoming events elsewhere in this issue, but I would like to remind you of the **A.G.M.** which is on **March 29th** commencing at 7.45. We would welcome some new faces at this meeting and perhaps a few volunteers to serve on the Committee.

*A talk on work in
local woodlands - all
invited.*

After the meeting, at approx 8.30 we have John Norris, from the Chiltern Woodlands to give a talk on the work that has been done and is still in progress in the local woods. This is of special

interest to the local people and we would like to extend a welcome to both North Dean and Speen residents to come along. A small charge may be made and light refreshments will be served.

North Dean has not had the brightest starts to the new year, and it is sad to record three deaths; Eva Anderson, who lived at the top end of the Village for many years, Elsie Shaw, who was the subject of our oldest resident story in the last issue, and Sarah Lynch, who lived most of her young life in North Dean, but had just moved with her family to Speen. Our hearts go out to all the families for their great sorrow and loss of loved ones.

Two more of our residents have been seriously ill during the early part of this year: Bill Chinn and Doug Redrup. We send them both our best wishes.

JOHN ROGERS

THE CUBS SUCCEED IN GOING IT ALONE

Regular readers of the Speen and North Dean News will know that the cub pack was reprieved from closure by a group of parents before Christmas. There are 15 cubs in the pack who are keen to continue and have supported the new leaders in their

efforts to keep the pack going, so things are looking good for the future. Up to now this term we have been looking at collections made by the cubs, these range from collections of Lego models to pigs and Christmas cards. Several cubs have made very creditable

bird boxes for their Handyman badge. We have had an outing to the Roald Dahl exhibition at the County Museum as part of the readers badge followed by lunch at MacDonalds.

PAULINE HALL



*Speen
WI*

*The WI have
just seen a
super slide show
and now they
are in relaxed
mood ready for
the tea and chat.*

JOHN OLIVER IS NO ORDINARY COMMUTER - as he travels between Spain and Russia in search of trade.

***FULL CIRCLE* JOHN OLIVER**

In one major respect, my professional career has been like a circle. I joined the R.A.F. as an officer cadet in 1957 and had the opportunity - rare at that time - to learn Russian. I struggled hard and seriously: Russian with its Cyrillic alphabet and complex grammar cannot be hurried, so I am glad I started then.

As a R.A.F. officer I believed (and still do) that the greatest post-war threat to world peace lay in the Maoist-Leninist imperialist aspirations of the former Soviet Union. One did not have to look far to confirm this. "Pravda" at that time was full of turgid, myopic, dangerous, political ramblings. Yet, this same background had also produced one of the great cultures in the world, particularly in literature - with figures like Pushkin, Turgenev, Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov - and in music, with giants like Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov and Rimsky-Korsakov. My attitude to Russia became and remained ambivalent. Anyway, for us, its military isolation as the no. 1 potential enemy made it more abstract than real. My interests and priorities changed.

Happily for all of us, the Berlin wall came down, 'Glasnost' and 'Perestroika' prevailed and the cold war ended. The risk of nuclear Armageddon receded. Coincidentally, after 32 years - my military service ended. This gave me an opportunity that I had always wanted but had always regarded as impossible: the chance to visit and work in Russia and its former Warsaw Pact neighbours.

Employed 4 years ago by a small import-export company, which had a 25 year presence in this market, I was quickly involved in a series of working visits to pulp and paper mills, oil and gas refineries, metallurgical rolling mills, machine building plants and former defence industry factories within the countries of the former Soviet Union, particularly Russia.

I have now experienced something of the severe Russian winter in the northern forests and in boundless beautiful Siberia. I have seen much of the rolling Urals landscape, the emptiness of Kazakhstan the black soil of south Ukraine and the oily mess that is Baku in Azerbaijan. I have tramped round the vestiges of the Juggerhant ministerial system that managed inefficiently all aspects of production. I have seen much of the decrepitude and obsolescence of Russian industry, as well as some fortunate locations that have benefitted from foreign investment. I have glimpsed the shambles of everyday life, where manholes are left uncovered and unmarked in busy roads and one can book flights on non-existent aeroplanes. I have met some impressively competent managers, who work for perhaps 1/100 of the salary of their Western equivalents, as well as some obviously incompetent demagogues. I have learnt the true meaning of atmospheric pollution at several industrial locations, where the sun is eclipsed by smoke and soot.

Twenty eight visits later, what are my feelings? There is awe at Russia's huge size, its geographic and climatic extremes,

steppe, taiga, tundra and rivers - are incomprehensibly vast. In Moscow, roads take longer to cross; walking 2 blocks may require 10 minutes. There is a sustained and deepened admiration for its rich culture. My reading list was extended to Solzhenitsyn and Bulgakov. There is disappointment that the road to democracy and a market economy is proving so formidable. There is shame that the best features of life under Communism (yes, there were some) are being submerged by some of the shallow, crude, values of Western capitalism. To me, it is sad that Pushkin's statue now shares the same vista as McDonalds. I am also sure that none of the past generations who laboured for human rights in Russia - from the Decembrists to Sakharov - did not struggle for the freedom to develop gambling casinos - and much else. There is worry at the escalating crime and at the lawlessness of much of the business in what was previously an over-controlled but non-violent society. Internal travel now requires concentration on different issues than hitherto. Sometimes, there is amazement at the current rate of change, especially in the dilapidated streets of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Wealth has polarised between the ridiculously rich and the abject poor. Central Moscow has recently become a huge building site. Until recently there were no Volvos, Mercedes, BMWs, Parisian perfumeries, supermarkets of Snickers bars - now these are commonplace. There is also humility at the patience, resilience, stamina and courage of many Russian people who accept conditions that

continued...

SPREEN PLAYGROUP "Play With Purpose"

Speen Playgroup opens every weekday during term-time from 9am to noon, at the Village Hall, for children aged between 3 and 5 to play and experience new things.

A full range of equipment is provided, covering all aspects of play and development, for example sand and water, puzzles, paint, dressing up, musical instruments and climbing frames.

The children are supervised by dedicated staff, following training schedules in line with Social Services and Pre-school Playgroup Association (PPA) guidelines. Every child is encouraged to take part in

the session's activities, although differences in the needs of each child are fully recognised.

The morning begins with children and staff sitting down together for registration. Very often this time is used for general discussion; children sharing thoughts or plans, or staff discussing the plan for the day. Plans usually revolve around the theme being followed. This term we have dealt with "transport" and now we are covering "Spring".

We move on from registration to playtime and an adult supervised activity. Art table activities usually reflect the topic being covered. There are regular cookery sessions.

At snack time, half way through the morning, the children sit together at table for milk or juice with biscuits, fruit, birthday cake etc. Toys

and games can be swapped for others, by staff, at this time. We try to be democratic, sometimes allowing children to choose specific activities.

As a child approaches school age, inclinations towards developing reading, mathematical and writing skills appear. These are brought into focus and broadened upon by the staff, through particular activities.

Our catchphrase at Playgroup is "play with purpose". Even when a child is having fun, a learning experience can be taking place. That is our primary aim.

If you would like to know more about the Playgroup, please feel free to pop in, after 9.30, on any school day.

ANNABELLE PATCHING -
Speen Playgroup Leader.



Our Gang

These happy playgroupers were photographed on St Valentines day. That's Damien Pitt in front and the rest, starting top left and going clockwise, are - Richard Page, Eirik Iden, Daniel Douglas, Michael How, Kyle Sutherland, Valerie Harland, (their big friend), and Tanya Craft.

Kyle and Tanya, having cheerfully insisted they weren't going to be photographed, rushed into frame at the last moment, nevertheless! Ed.

...John Oliver continued.

we would find intolerable but who still manage to work conscientiously and hard. There is great sympathy for very many older Russians who have toiled for several decades and then lost all their savings in sustained monetary inflation during the

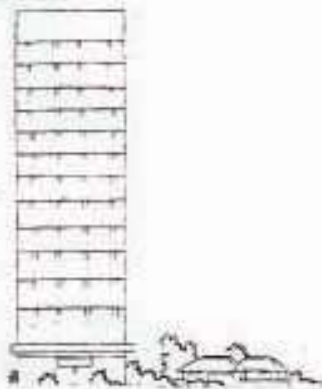
last 4 years that has at times exceeded 25% per month!

In this country, we worry about highly-educated people with no jobs. The scale of our experience is dwarfed by the post-Perestroika Russian scene, where there is a very highly educated workforce

striving to obtain the means and the additional skills to make a market economy work. When they do, watch out!

If anyone who is fortunate enough to live in Speen feels like complaining, go East - but do not travel with a tour company!

RECENT SPEEN PLANNING APPLICATIONS - Notified to us by Don White.

W/94/6608	Whileaway Cottage, Grubbins Lane, Speen Front Porch, detached garage & new drive	
T/94/0132	Farthings, Studridge Lane, Speen Pollarding to two ash and one holly tree	
T/94/0110	One Hampden Gate, Speen Trimming one horse chestnut tree	
W/95/5010	Flowers Bottom Farm, Speen Erection of two storey side extension, first floor rear extension and alterations to stable block	
W/94/6993	1 Mynthurst View, Hampden Road, Speen Two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension	
W/94/7052	Applegate Cottage, Studridge Lane, Speen Demolition of garage and erection of extension	
W/94/6972	Turnip End Cottage, Speen Replacement summer house	
W/94/6918	Speen Stores Demolition and erection of house and garage	!!!

DECISIONS OF WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

W/94/6285	Chiltern Heights, Grubbins Lane Demolish Single Garage and build Double Garage	Approved
W/94/6608	Single Storey Porch and Detached Garage Whileaway Cottage, Grubbins Lane	Approved
W/94/6972	Turnip End Cottage Replacement Summer House	Approved
W/94/7052	Applegate Cottage, Studridge Lane Demolish Garage, build side extension, roofspace and new garage	Refused
T/95/0007	Woodbine Cottage, Studridge Lane Removal of diseased wood fr	Approved
T/94/0132	Farthings, Studridge Lane Pollard three trees	Approved

NOTE

Applications for work to trees were necessary as the site is in a Conservation Area.



"BONNE ANNEE" from the TWINNING ASSOCIATION as local youngsters head for France.

TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Visits To France

We hope to take about ten young people on our next visit to Hambye, from April 14th to 20th. They will be supervised by volunteer adults, to help on trips out and generally keep an eye on the English youngsters. We expect to have a very enjoyable stay.

Return Visits

The French will be coming here for the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May, so Tony Molesworth will soon be on the trail of families willing to host. I'm sure he'd be only too pleased if you were to volunteer!

VICTORY IN EUROPE.....50 YEARS ON

The Edwardians will be with us on May 6th to help us celebrate the occasion. We are calling this evening 'ENSATINMENT'. It will be held at Lacey Green Village Hall from 7.30pm for 8.00 at a cost of £12.00. Come in "Fancy Dress"

Donation

The committee has received a very generous donation from Sue Morris in memory of Peter. Only very new members will be unaware of all that Peter did for Twinning, and we would like to use the money for the benefit of all the membership, as well as in a way that will provide a lasting memento of Peter. The committee are currently investigating just

how to do this, and there will be details in our next newsletter. But meanwhile we would like to thank Sue, on behalf of all members of the association, for the gift.

Thanks, to all who helped at the wine tasting evening in November, those who set out, cleared up, gave raffle prizes and especially the indefatigable catering team led by Margaret Davis, and to those who came along.

I hope to see you all at events in 1995, meanwhile I wish all our members Bonne Annee.

PAT WILLIAMS



"...yet I live."

A SHORT STORY FOR EASTER

Sam strained his eyes, looking through the bars, trying to glimpse the first rays of dawn. A thousand times he kept asking himself "Why" and "How stupid to get into this mess", but much, much worse, was the over-riding panic that churned his stomach, and made him feel physically sick. "I'm going to die" he whispered, there, it was out now, death staring at him full in the face. Immediately he vomited, as if his body could not take the awfulness of those words. He had to face it, very very soon his life would be over. He knew he deserved it, now, before he felt

angry and bitter, but now, all that was left was fear.

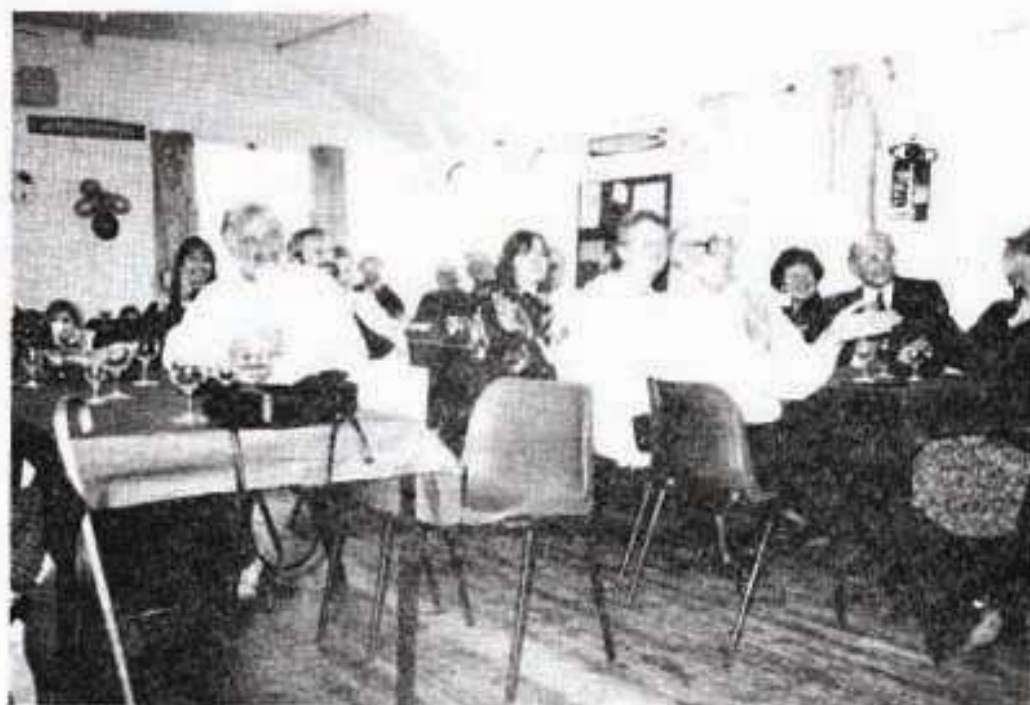
Suddenly the first rays appeared, and he heard approaching footsteps outside his cell door. "This is it" he thought, "they are coming for me now". Sheer panic rose through his whole body, his legs no longer supported him, and he fell to the floor with a scream. The key turned in the lock, the door opened...."Sam", the voice was full of love, "Get up". Sam was confused, no-one had spoken to him kindly in a long time, as he looked up, he saw a stranger, but oh what love was on his face. "Sam you are free to go, I will take your place!" Sam shook his head

violently. I must be dreaming he thought, but no, the door was open. "How can you want to take my place? Do you know what I have done? The stranger smiled, a sad smile, "I must take your place, if I don't, you will not be able to live!" "But what can I do for you? I could never pay you back for this" Sam whispered. "No" said the stranger, "don't try, just believe, trust and rely on me. Even though I die in your place, yet I live!"

The full light of day filled the cell, Sam walked through the open door, and knew in his heart that he chose to believe, he chose LIFE. (John 3.16)

IRENE TINSLEY

North Dean's over-sixties at their annual lunch



They all look suspiciously young to me - and just count those empty glasses!



I don't know what the kitchen staff were on, but it was obviously good stuff!

Bridget may be quite sober - she always looks like that!

Jeanne Hanford invites you to join her on the PLAYING FIELD



Apparently my headline above the Playing Field item in the previous issue may have implied that volunteers were required to cut the vast acreage of grass. Well the good news is that this is not the case as the grass is cut by the Cricket Club - and a very good job they make of it too," says Jeanne.

No, what's really wanted is a new team of about six or so volunteers to join the committee, partly to spread the load and partly to replace people leaving. Examples of what is involved include: Strimming around the playground area, some hedge maintenance, very occasional pavilion maintenance, keeping the three litter bins cleared, plus

helping to organise and run the Bonfire Night. I also understand that there is a specific need at this time for a new secretary.

However, for more details please phone Jeanne herself on 488402.

ED,



Playing Fields 'Pub Night'

One minor fund-raising ploy is to get the locals 'drunk'. This lot claimed they walked to the Hall - but did they all walk home?!

VILLAGE CALENDAR

APRIL

1st Auction of Promises
Speen Village Hall 8.00pm
Horticultural Soc.
Spring Show. stage
exhibits 10 - 11
opening at 2pm.
6th W.I. Birthday Party
18th Parish Council meeting 7.30
Methodist School Hall Lacey
Green
22nd Race Night North Dean
Village Hall 7 for 7.30pm
28th Theatre Club 'The Woman in
Black'

MAY

4th W.I. Resolutions meeting
6th Twinning 'ENSATINMENT'
Lacey Green Village Hall 7.30 for
8.00pm
16th Parish Council meeting 7.30
Speen Village Hall
21st Clay Pigeon Shoot - North
Dean committee
28th Speen Garden Open Day -
Ted Drew

JUNE

11th Speen Fun Day - Playing
fields committee
11th BBQ and Plant Sale - North
Dean Hall
14th Parish Council meeting 7.30
Methodist School Hall Lacey
Green
16th Children's Disco 5-7pm
marquee at school
17th Caribbean Night 8pm
marquee at school
18th Speen Garden Open Day -
Ted Drew
24th Pig Roast, North Dean
Village Hall 6.30pm Contact Pat
Rogers
25th Children's Party North Dean
Village Hall

SOME FUTURE DATES...

22nd July 'Last Night of the Proms,
Theatre club
22nd July Pig Roast North Dean
5th August North Dean Fete
19th November Cancer Research
Fayre

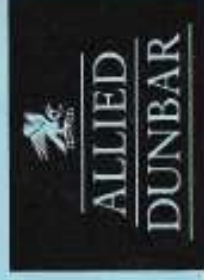
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