

SPEEN AND NORTH DEAN

NEWS *Issue 6 Autumn '95*

THE SPEEN SHOP SITE SAGA

What we know of the story so far - except that the best bits are happening behind closed doors

Planning applications during the past thirty five years: *(according to Don White)*

Display of Public Information Panels	25th March 1960	Refused
Extend Shop and New Shop Front	19th July 1963	Approved
Erect Garage and Store	23rd May 1974	Refused
Extend Stables, erect Conservatory and Carport	29th August 1984	Refused
Erect Detached Dwelling and Garage	15th January 1990	Refused
Demolish Shop, erect House and Garage	25th May 1995	Refused

This brings us to the latest application, 95/06421, by the Bucks Housing

Association Ltd, of Easton Street, High Wycombe, to build 5 houses and one shop entirely within the site of the former Speen Stores. Obviously this has become a very emotive issue in Speen and there have already been three crowded public meetings about it in the Village Hall. Please read Irene Tinsley's reports on these meetings.

Basically the Bucks Housing Association make no pretence; they admit that this application is against the official policy of the Local Plan as it affects Speen, but they feel justified on the grounds of a perceived social need for more affordable rented housing in the countryside. They also have implicit backing, in principle, from a government which is encouraging housing associations to seek out these so-called "exception sites". This particular application also has the strong backing of Councillor Mrs Gabbitts and a proportion of people within Speen, some of whom feel that the sacrifice of some rural principles is a price worth paying for the chance of a new shop, and some of whom also see it as a small step towards adjusting the balance between the respective numbers of "rich and poor" within the village.

Officially, Bucks Housing should not get away with this assault on the recently hard won Local Plan designed to spare villages such as ours from any further backfilling - let alone the obvious access dangers in this case. But in the real world of backdoor politics, those with power and influence quite often do exactly what they like - or in this case will they? The planning committee of Wycombe District Council is due to consider this application at its meeting this month, October, but the expectation of those who seem to know about these things is that it will be deferred to the next meeting, which is on 1st November. Meanwhile, ordinary villagers have the right to express their opinions to the planning committee and there may still be time for them to do so. With potential building land to the rear and alternative forms of access etc, this is obviously a complicated issue. We hear that delicate negotiations are in progress.

What Policy C4 of the Local Plan now says about "built-up areas in the Green Belt"

"...PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY ONLY BE GIVEN FOR THE FOLLOWING:-

... (iii) VERY LIMITED INFILLING, WHERE INFILLING IS DEFINED AS BUILDING ON UNDEVELOPED LAND WITHIN THE BUILT-UP AREA AND REPRESENTS THE CLOSING OF AN EXISTING SMALL GAP IN AN OTHERWISE BUILT-UP FRONTAGE. INFILL DEVELOPMENT WILL USUALLY BE OF SINGLE PLOTS OF A SIZE AND SHAPE COMPARABLE TO THE PLOTS OF THE ADJOINING DEVELOPMENT AND MUST NOT HARM THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

It goes on to specifically include Speen within the terms of the above detailed policy.

STOP PRESS 4th OCTOBER.

Our Editor visited the Planning Department at lunchtime today, to inspect the REPRESENTATIONS FILE (and the filing tray). This is what he found:

LETTERS MAINLY IN FAVOUR

12

(Plus a petition in favour with 62 signatures)

LETTERS MAINLY AGAINST

11

Different picture now
claims Residents Assoc
see page 4...

Your Letters

BALANCED VILLAGE NOT YUPPY GHETTO

Dear Editor,

It is more than half a century since I first came to Speen, when a much smaller population sustained a baker, butcher, Post Office and two general stores (and with an hourly bus service from 6.30 am to 10.30 pm!) All these are gone.

GREEN BELT PRINCIPLES BETRAYED & FOR WHAT?

Dear Editor,

I should like to express my concern, shared by a number of Speen residents, regarding the proposed development of the Speen shop site for four houses, a flat and a shop.

Between 1988 and 1994, four different applications have been submitted to Wycombe District Council and all have been refused for inadequate access

NO" EXCEPTION" TO SAFETY, COUNCILLOR

Dear Editor,

I am writing re the shop site planning application and the meetings held to discuss this in the village hall.

Having not been a resident in Speen for long, I was pleasantly surprised and very reassured to see so many people turn up at all three meetings.

Personally, I think it would be wonderful to have a shop in the village and I'd be delighted to support it, although I have strong doubts about its viability. I also feel that the Bucks Housing Association are trying to fill a hole in the Speen housing market and that their sentiments are honourable.

However, *in order to fulfill the application the Speen shop site must be designated an "exception site".* What this means to the lay person is that, to some extent, the Housing Association would *thereby overcome the planning laws.* The proposed plan does not adhere to the regulations concerning the density of houses,

Meanwhile, the character of this quiet village with many flint cottages is being changed by the abundance of large commuter-style houses

Now we have an opportunity to restore the balance slightly through the practical combined plan for a shop not burdened with heavy overheads, and reasonably-priced small rented cottages for the not-so-wealthy.

and on Green Belt principles. Therefore it is difficult to understand why Mrs Gabbitas is supporting this one so enthusiastically - although I am aware that whenever any land in the ward becomes available for development, Mrs Gabbitas is convinced that the need is always for a number of small properties.

The Bucks Housing Association have offered Speen the shop premises rent and rate free, but have not made any detailed arrangements regarding the running, equipping and stocking of

the number of houses using the same access and the parking arrangements for the shop.

When, at the second meeting, *I raised the matter of the compromised safety of the children* using the school bus, to Councillor Gabbitas, she replied in what I felt was a patronising and offensive manner, *"Well my dear, you will just have to walk your children to the bus stop like they do in Lacey Green."* I find this completely unacceptable. We do not live in Lacey Green. I, for one, would not live in Lacey Green because of the busy road. One of the assets of living in Speen is that our children are safe to walk to the school bus on their own.

Could Bucks Housing not rethink their plans slightly? Wouldn't it be nice to have a shop that our children could use safely as well as the adults? According to Mr Crook for Bucks Housing, we will not be able to drive them to the shop as there will be insufficient parking.

I would like Bucks Housing to revise their plans so that we could

I do hope the Council get written confirmation of the loudly-applauded support voiced at the village hall meeting, so that the scheme outlined by the Bucks Housing Association can be implemented.

*Anne Selby
Grubbins Lane*

the shop. *We would all enjoy the convenience of a shop in the village, but there is some doubt that it could succeed.* The Housing Association has made provision to convert the shop into another dwelling if the project fails.

It is obvious that that there is a potentially dangerous situation arising from the number of cars which could be driving in and out of this development.

We all want to get rid of the eyesore in the middle of the village, but is this the best option?

Joy Davies

have our shop and a development that would fit in with the Conservation Area and be an asset to the village.

Speen is obviously a village which still has a strong community spirit, so if we cannot have a pub in which to meet and chat - then maybe a shop!

*Lesley Sutherland
Water Lane*

ONE OF SEVERAL SUCH LETTERS TO OUR TREASURER -

"Please find attached £5 towards the cost of printing. I have found the publication very useful and as a member of the village who works full time I find it a helpful way to keep abreast of everything that is going on - especially the ongoing saga of the shop! Our thanks to all concerned!"

(Of course, if we did know everything going on we could find the newsletter on blackmail alone... Ed.)

EDITORIAL

No, we haven't abandoned photos forever; "proper" printing costs having escalated, we have to rebuild resources. So it's back to "primitive" photocopying for this issue. Glued-up artwork gets stuck in the copiers, so we have to produce a "master" photocopy and copy the rest off that. This, we find, gives grainy photos, even when the prints had been screened to make

them more photocopy friendly. Photos intended for this issue will, I hope, be used next time.

I recently received a severe criticism from a reader who deplored *those* letters. Let me say that if someone had written saying "Mrs Bloggs leaves her washing out for days" - then I would not have published it. But here was a local cause celebre - an obsession with collecting and displaying rubbish in

the grand manner, like some vast exhibition of modern art; so it was both annoying and amusing at the same time, to many villagers. Okay, maybe I should have deleted some unnecessary comments - so I apologise for the failure to do so. Thanks for supporting your little local rag and carry on writing it.

PETER DAWSON, Chervil Meadow, Chapel Hill 488222

OUR LADY IN CHARGE OF THE PIGGY BANK WISHES TO THANK YOU

A fantastic thank you to those who have donated towards the printing costs of your village newsletter.

It has been a hugely generous response; the total collection so far being over £200, with more to come. Not only have so many of you been happy to give a pound or two, but it's been good to hear your opinions, both on the doorstep and in your letters.

As you probably know, I have kissed the Blarney Stone and so I've really enjoyed chatting to you all. Special thank you's to those of you who were so determined to part with your money that you put it through my door!

Please don't feel left out if you have not been asked for support...yet! Irene will be covering Flowers Bottom, Highwood Bottom etc with the next issue and "North Deaners" will also be visited soon. Thanks also to Gloria for doing house to house calls on her delivery patch.

If you have not yet donated, but wish to, please pop you offering through my door (Ashton, Studridge Lane) at any time, and with a note to say who you are. *Please remember that you are not being asked to pay for the newsletter* (that is what English "racists" tend to call "Irish" - Ed!) *But it does cost money to have it printed* and your contributions now will help keep us going through to 1996.

CAROLINE PARTRIDGE TREASURER

WHO TO CONTACT

Baptist Church	David King	01494 450611
Beavers (Wed.5.15-6.15)	Catherine Foster	01296 84699
Cubs (Wed 6.30-8.00)	Clive Rowland	488779
Cricket Club	Mike Bounds	488572
Fete Committee	Peter Dawson	488222
Good Neighbours Organiser	Gloria Holmes	488420
Guides (Thurs)	Pauline Hall	488372
Horticultural Society	Ted Drew	488738
Mothers and Toddlers (Tues)	Christine Dunnington	488203
North Dean Village Hall	John Rogers	563153
North Dean Newsletter Rep.	Bridget Lister	562041
Speen Parish Councillor	Don White	488437
Speen Parish Councillor	Jude Awdry	488607
Local District Councillor	Jean Gabbittas	562895
Playgroup (Daily 9-12)	Annabelle Patching	488402
Playing Fields	Jeanne Hanford	0844 346469
Speen School Office		488321
Speen School PTA	Amanda Cleaver	488288
Speen Village Hall Bookings	Catherine Butler	565380
Table Tennis	Jim Lawrence	488412
Tennis Court	Roger Craft	488015
Theatre Outings	Sheila Tidball	0844 344610
WI (1st Thur each month)	Barbara Collett	488434
Speen/N.Dean Youth Club	Rob and Tricia Lenko	488377
Speen Residents Assoc	Paul Rogerson	488348

THE VILLAGE POND

I've just received a superb 54-page book from a very helpful Richard Green of the National Rivers Authority, called "Ponds and Conservation". It is going to be a useful guide for looking after our local "damp patch". It's everything you wanted to know about pond conservation and more - addresses for physical help, advice and even where to get grants, is included. So far there are six of you interested to form an action group and any of you can borrow this book from me whenever you ask.

We will have to get together to discuss aims and exchange views. Basically - and to state the obvious - *we want to achieve a year round well defined pool of water in the centre, if that is at all possible*. First we talk - then we get covered in mud - does that appeal to any others?

Peter Dawson

GOOD NEIGHBOURS has now been running 4 years. Don't hesitate to get in touch, if you or someone you know in the village, may need help from a fellow villager.

"90% of those present were against the application as it stood", says Paul.

SPEEN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

FIRST MEETING - 6TH SEPTEMBER 1995

Over one hundred residents packed tightly into the village hall for the first meeting of the Speen Residents Association. Paul Rogerson chaired the meeting, explaining that he was a temporary chairman, until proper election procedures for the new association could be carried out.

Of course this meeting, and indeed the formation of the association, had been prompted by the recent planning application forwarded for the shop site. It was shown that the last four planning applications, by private developers, had been refused by the local council for varying reasons. Inadequate

access, detriment to the amenities of the neighbourhood, green belt principles, and houses too big. The Bank, in 1994, applied for demolition of the shop, and for one house to be erected instead. This was refused on the grounds of change of use (policy is to keep shops in villages if possible.)

The latest application by the Bucks Housing Association, is for 5 houses and one shop, which will be managed by Bucks Housing; they intend to give 50% of any profit from the shop into community use. It was pointed out that these houses will be tightly packed together on a small piece of land.

Many residents were alarmed to discover that the two adjoining plots at the rear are up for sale and might be used by the Housing Association to build on even further. It was stated that this could lead to a mini

estate of high density housing, detrimental to the village.

Questions to the chairman came thick and fast; it was obvious that opinion was divided and a number of people felt a negative attitude was coming from the chair. Others felt a shop would not succeed and might be turned into a private dwelling too. Fears were voiced that another access onto the crossroads could prove to be dangerous, especially for children crossing. Thought was also given to the possibility of the "Right to buy act"; after four years could the tenants or their relatives buy the rented property?

Finally the chairman reiterated the purpose of the meeting - "do we ACCEPT, REJECT or MODIFY?" and asked the village to put sensible questions to the next meeting, held by the Bucks Housing Association on 19th September 1995.

STOP PRESS: *In a phone conversation just before we went to press, Paul Rogerson stated that the written responses given at the second Residents Association meeting, reported below, showed 10% in favour of the Bucks Housing plan as it stands, 20% were utterly against and 70% would support some development, but not this one. I hope that's right.*

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION - 26TH SEPTEMBER 1995

I was expecting this meeting to be packed out like the others, however when I arrived there were no chairs put out for a meeting, instead tables were around the room and people milling about from one to the other.

This made for a very different atmosphere as people chatted amicably to each other while scanning the contents of the tables. On one table was an enlarged plan of the site with details of the various elevations of the houses and shop. On another were various letters from the Residents Association to the Bucks Housing Association and Wycombe Council. A third table had various letters against the scheme. On the last table were voting letters! Letters that would be sent to the Council, on whether people wanted to accept reject or modify the scheme.

As each person entered, they were given a questionnaire "How long do you believe that the proposal

for the new shop will succeed?" This was put in a rather provocative way stating that the general upkeep of the shop will be paid for by the village.

After about thirty minutes, the chairman of the Bucks Housing Association C.M. Winter Taylor, called for silence, then drawing attention to the questionnaire, claimed most of it to be untrue. This started a general argument, with many voices trying to be heard. Paul Rogerson finally managed to quieten the proceedings, and admitted the way the statements had been written could be misconstrued, however he did point out that the overheads for running the shop must surely come from any profits, and therefore would be 'paid' by the village.

Mr. Winter Taylor suggested that an entrepreneur might take on the shop - laughter was scornfully forthcoming from the floor. Mr. Winter Taylor did admit that the fine details had not yet been worked out, and would not be until they obtained planning permission. Derision from

the floor this time, as it was said by many that the whole scheme had not been thought through properly, and that the village was being rushed into accepting the plan too quickly.

At this point, John Oliver, keen to take some pressure off Mr. Winter Taylor, read his notes to the meeting, he concluded 'I urge you all not to attempt to torpedo this concept before it reaches the Planning Approval stage. We can then move on to the details'. Many voices were raised after this, and one lady said "I wish people would not say we are negative for disagreeing with the proposals, if we were negative we would not be so active! Lets use the terms 'For or Against' instead".

The meeting tailed off, and many people voted and left soon after. Others stood around chatting, as they did in the beginning, but this time voicing their own opinions in small groups. One question I have, when this is all over, will people be friendly again?

IRENE TINSLEY

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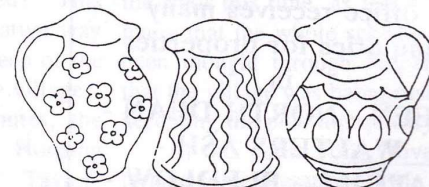
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*Tessa Rubbra : Valley Cottage, Highwood Bottom,
Speen, Bucks . HP17 0PY*

Sharon Douglas MGCP

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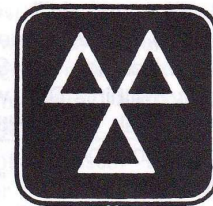
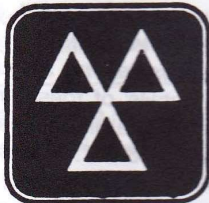
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then Youth Club is the place to be...

THE SPEEN AND NORTH DEAN YOUTH CLUB IS UP AND AWAY - OK?

The Speen and North Dean Youth Club held its first meeting on Wednesday 13th September in the Baptist Church Hall, when twenty two young people enjoyed an evening of table tennis, pool, darts and, of course, *chat*. This is the first time for a while that a youth club has been held in Speen, so a lot of the evening was spent sorting out the hall and discussing our plans for the future.

We have been very lucky in gaining advice and support from **Joseph Poon** of the Wycombe and District Youth Department. This enables us to obtain transport for outings and the use of the Sports Centre in Hazlemere. Our basic plan is to ask the members of the club to organise one outing a

month which could involve, say, bowling, swimming, a visit to London or a game of 5 a side soccer in the sports hall - whatever it is **THEY** choose. Also we hope to invite people with special skills or interests to come and talk to us about them, and we would be pleased to hear from anyone who feels they may have something to offer in that way.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank **David King** for his support in restarting the club. David ran the youth club in Speen some years ago and he was keen to help it again. It is mainly due to his efforts that we are able to use the Baptist Hall, which is an ideal venue.

We hope that word will spread

to any young people between the ages of 12 and 16 who would like to come along, and we hope it will give them a relaxing and interesting evening - an alternative to the bus shelter!

We will meet every Wednesday at 8pm, except for the third Wednesday in the month when we may be out and about! We finish at 10pm sharp and do ask parents to make sure their sons and daughters can get home safely, especially with winter not far off.

If you have any questions about the club, or suggestions, or you might like to volunteer to help, then please ring either of us on **488337, any time.**

ROBERT AND PATRICIA LENKO

GUIDE CAMP REPORTS ONE AND TWO

On the weekend of 14-16th July, 29 guides of the 1st Hughenden Valley Guides, plus six adults, met at Piggotts Hill for our annual camp. It was a weekend of very mixed weather; on Saturday morning, St Swithin's Day, we woke up to torrential rain, with most patrol tents and bedding flooded. This should have heralded "40 days of rain" - as we all know, but this did not happen!

During Colours three new girls took their Promise and we were visited by the District Commissioner and the County Queen's Guide Coordinator.

In the evening we had a Camp Fire, with Rob Lenko on guitar. As we left, exhausted and none too clean! on Sunday afternoon, we had an enormous water-fight, and most people left camp dripping wet but happy (with our one boy scout cub dressed in Guide uniform!)

REBECCA AWDRY - Thrush Patrol

Four of our Guides attended an international camp held during eight days of August at Thornton College near Buckingham.

As well as other Guides from Wycombe and Chesham there were also some Guides and Guiders from Canada, and lots of ideas and experiences were swapped. The activities at the camp included international crafts, horse riding, dinghy sailing, canoeing, tennis, army assault course, ice skating and bowling.

On 21st September, three Guides, **Sarah and Louisa Cliffe and Sarah Gooding**, were presented with Baden Powell Trefoils by the Captain of Wycombe Wanderers and player Jason Cousins. The Baden Powell Trefoil is the highest award of the Guide Section and involves service projects, an international badge and a variety of personal challenges. We are very proud of their achievement and the Guides all enjoyed the presentation evening and got lots of autographs!

PAULINE HALL

THEATRE OUTINGS

Our October and November trips are already sold out. However we hope you'll **join us on December 17th for the Bach Family Carol Concert at the Albert Hall.**

On January 12th we'll be going to see "Riverdance" - the show everyone is talking about!

For further details of these trips, or membership of the group, please **contact me on 488377.** You don't have to live in Speen to join us.

SHEILA TIDBALL

FAIR IN AID OF CANCER RESEARCH

Bridget Lister wishes to advertise that this event takes place at North Dean Village Hall on Sunday 19th November between 11am and 1pm. Ed.

*Good Neighbours
Gloria's latest "Tea and Chat" was at the end of September and her next one is on 1st November.*

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF SPEEN CRICKET CLUB

SPEEN CRICKET CLUB - 1995 SEASON

The 1995 season has been another successful year for the Club, both on and off the pitch.

At the start of the year the picture was not promising - the pool of players available for selection was unusually small and the bank balance was not too healthy! - Some work had to be done. Due to the efforts of a core of individuals and because of the spirit in this small Club the position was transformed over a four month period. The club now finds itself in as healthy a position as it has been for a number of years.

So, who are the people that made the difference this year and what is it that is needed to run the club?

Firstly we need fixtures. This crucial role undertaken by Keith Rosling - with great success. Keith provides a jam packed fixture card year on year. Speen seldom lose a fixture which is a reflection on Keith's efforts and on how much teams enjoy visiting our small village.

Secondly there is the ground, for this we have the Playing Fields Association to thank for allowing cricket to be played on the field. Mike Thomas' unstinting efforts keep

the playing field and cricket square looking in super condition - not only for the benefit of the cricketers, but for the whole village.

Thirdly we need people within the club who are prepared to contribute to team organisation - much time spent on the telephone - and arranging social/fund raising activities. This is where Chris Simpson the club President (and opening bat!) and myself pitch in.

Finally we need a group of players and friends who are all prepared to pitch in and help - pitch preparation, teas, support at the social events etc., which are as much a part of being a member of a small club as playing the game on a Sunday.

The club generally run two social events a year which between them must raise between £700 - £1000 if the club is to remain solvent and self sufficient.

The Annual Ball is the main event, a formal black tie affair, to be held this year at the Oak Room in Wycombe. This is our flagship event and we put a lot of effort into making the evening as enjoyable as possible. Star turn last year was the President himself with 3 Colleagues providing first class harmonies - a barbershop quartet. (The bright orange waistcoats were a real hit).

This year we have also run a Race Night at Naphill Village Hall.

Thanks to the efforts of all concerned, and the generosity of our guests we managed to raise in excess of £350.

So, what about the successes on the field? Well, we will never challenge for county honours, but the standard is surprisingly high and we *invariably win more than we lose* (only just this year in fact!) We would be more successful if we repeatedly put out our strongest players, but that is not the purpose of the club. We make every effort to give as many players as possible a game, as often as possible - that is one of *the main reasons that Speen Cricket Club is such a success - we enjoy our cricket, whatever the standard.*

The highlight of this season was undoubtedly the 3 team tournament contested by Speen, North Dean (I bet you didn't know they had a Cricket Club!) and Cheeky Monkeys (a guest team from Marlow Rugby Club). Each team played the other on a round robin basis. I am pleased to report that Speen emerged as winners with North Dean runners-up and Cheeky Monkeys slipping on a banana skin and finishing third.

It was a hugely successful day enjoyed by all the participants. Hopefully it will be repeated next year - and who knows, perhaps Speen Residents could enter a side.

Wishing you all a cosy winter.

MIKE BOUNDS

NORTH DEAN CHRONICLE - An update

2nd edition available from NWR at £2 Since the 'Chronicle' was published in 1993# some interesting material has come to light,

* Fragments of several Roman pots have been found by Mrs. Bradley on her allotment in North Dean and identified by the County Museum. (The precious Roman find in North Dean, a small hoard of coins, was exactly 200 years ago! Neither are, of course, definite evidence of Roman settlement).

* Other shards, found in Pigotts Wood, by John Nuttgem, are of 12th-14th century date.

* The Young family, who were substantial local landowners till they sold up in 1894 were known as "Young of North Dean". Only after the publication of the Chronicle did I

discover that the family continues, and I have corresponded with Sir William Young, the 10th Baronet, who lives in London. He has lent me some interesting documents and a map from the last century.

* In appendix 1 on the 'Chronicle' I considered the question of where was the 'mansion' of Richard Sydenham ("Gent, of Pigotts";) died 1737; High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire 1727). His estate was sold by his heir to the Hampden estate in 1755 and from the Stewards Day Book for 1761-62 there is clear evidence of the demolition of a substantial house at Pigotts.

On and off throughout the winter, men were employed 'taking down at Pigotts' and the materials were transported to Hampden House, where extensions were being build.

Cartloads of wainscot floors, and much timber went to Hampden - and 294 loads of bricks. (John Montague, farmer at Pigotts farm, was paid £49 for moving the bricks - 3 shillings and 4 pence a load. Compared to today, materials were relatively more valuable than labour.

So Richard Sydenham's 'mansion' (valued at £500 in 1755) and probably built for him early in the century in Queen Anne or early Georgian style only stood for 40 or 50 years. Evidence of it is still to be found at Pigotts - in many parts of the orchard there are broken bricks 9" down, and some foundations have been found. Perhaps some day it may be possible to trace the outline of where the mansion stood...

NWR (562167)

BUILDING IS FOREVER

***Look at that site,
think of the worst
that could happen,
it probably will.***

Dear me!

If the housing association continued its policy of buying existing cottages and the occasional single dwelling frontage infill, this would enable them to build up a stock of houses here, without eroding the rural character of the village for present and future generations. I'm not against townscapes - in towns, but country villages need to be retained in this area with their rural appearance protected. Speen was especially named in the Local Plan, Policy C4 as one which deserved to be rescued from further backfilling.

Until the recent emergence of the Local Plan, Speen was ever vulnerable to creeping suburbia; local government being increasingly reluctant to fund the cost of appeals they were tending to lose.

But euphoria was short-lived when a lameduck central government, panicking at the consequences of its own housing policies, began to urge local government to seek out "exception sites" even in sensitive country areas, for the building of rented housing. No green patch in Speen now

seems safe from being bricked over. It hasn't taken long for the shadow to fall and the bulldozers may start to move in as early as March 1996. Tempted by the illusion of a village shoplet, many local villagers will be there to welcome the builders. Approval seems virtually predetermined. Bucks Housing frankly admit they would like to build more and that will remain on their agenda for the future if this one succeeds.

Sitting in the planning department file for the shop site application is a letter from a Speen resident advocating that the whole of the shop site, plus Tree Tops and the paddock beyond, should be built over as one large housing estate. This, he suggests, would imply the two adjacent drives being merged into a roadway, thereby creating a new crossroads on the bend at the brow of the hill, which he says should be laid out as a roundabout.

Next to this letter is another one from a Speen resident which says that those who oppose the application are just "an unrepresentative clique." That is a rather sad and unnecessary comment from one villager about others, merely because some people wish to retain what remains of the rural character of Speen and do not think that the shop is either viable or worth the development price, albeit one respects the views of those who

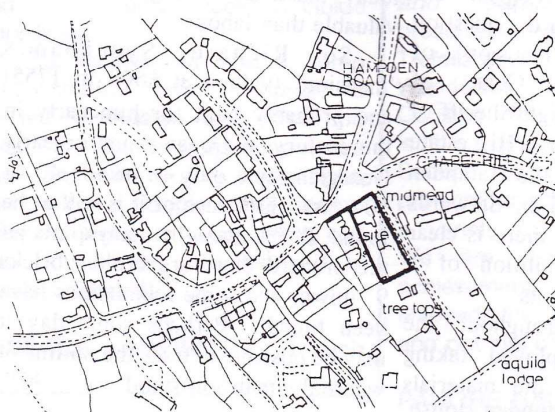
see it otherwise.

And did you see the letter in this week's Free Press from a person living in a remote corner of Cornwall. This former Speen resident was deploring the fact that Abbotswood was not built over with 60 houses instead of 16. This gentleman, now living in the wide open spaces of the Duchy, apparently wishes that all those he left behind should live on dense housing estates.

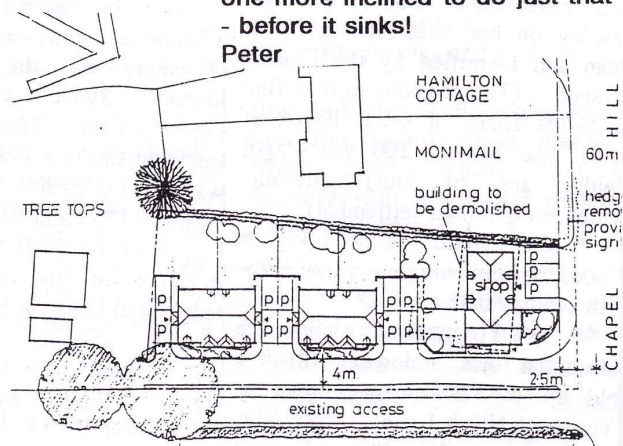
You sometimes hear these outdated sentiments, based on inverted snobbery, by those who feel that they are the real Speen people and others are less so. In fact Speen remains a very mixed area in housing terms; everything here from mobile homes to all kinds of modest houses apart from larger family houses. What is mainly absent is the type of house normally lived in by the seriously well-heeled. Join any of the village organisations or attend any of the events and you will discover that there is a complete absence of airs and graces, or so it seems to me. Retaining the present housing, car and people density is what the objections are about, I believe.

When I hear about interested parties, excluding you and me, getting together in delicate negotiations, it makes me nervous; being told that the Speen and North Dean News should not rock the boat makes one more inclined to do just that - before it sinks!

Peter



LOCATION PLAN



I wonder how many paddocks, orchards, gardens even, have already been offered to Bucks Housing...

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH GETS STARTED IN SPEEN



With support received following her letter in an earlier issue of this newsletter, Jackie Newman has launched an extension of Neighbourhood Watch (NW) in Speen.

Building upon John Radford's experience with NW in Abbotswood, Jackie invited a group to Hedgerows, Studridge Lane on 4th October 1995, to be briefed by PC Richards from the Community Liaison Department of Thames Valley Police (TVP) Aylesbury and to hear of John's experiences with the scheme.

PC Richards explained that from its early beginnings in Cheshire less than 20 years ago, NW has grown to 130,000 schemes countrywide, with 838 in the TVP area. He went on to emphasise that NW was owned

by their communities and supported by the police. Encouragingly, Aylesbury Vale and High Wycombe councils were now financially supporting NW schemes. Speen is in the Wendover sector, with police stations there and in Princes Risborough giving support through civilian volunteer coordinators.

Jackie has enlisted coordinators in Speen as follows:

Jackie and Lol Sims - Studridge Lane

Tom Davies - Woodview Drive

Clive Rainbow - Monckton Waye

John Fox and Terry Carlton - Cornerways, Hampden Gate

Loiz Bale - Wayside

Geoff Pinder - Chapel Hill

John Radford - Abbotswood.

Jackie is seeking volunteers for the Bottoms, Grubbins Lane and Moses Plat, Hampden Road, Water lane, St Peter's Close and Chapel

Hill; volunteers each covering 12 - 15 households is ideal. Once volunteers for all these areas are in place, the remaining gaps will then be filled. If you would like to help in this worthwhile venture, which will not only be of value to the community as a whole, but also fulfil a basic need for personal security as well as having financial advantages through reduced household insurance. Please would you let Jackie Newman know by calling her on 01494 488474.

Development of Speen NW will build over the winter. It is planned to have a Village Meeting in the New Year to explain arrangements to all, with the objective of establishing complete Neighbourhood Watch cover for the village during 1996. TERRY CARLTON

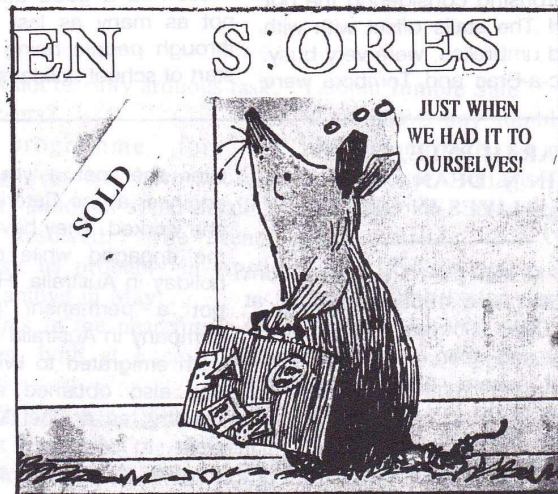
If anyone thought that Abbotswood had abandoned their Neighbourhood Watch project - not so, someone stole the sign!

Scotland reclaims Nan Andrew

Nan was born just outside Crieff in Perthshire and spent her married life in Dundee with her husband Dodd before moving to Speen in 1978.

She just loves to be busy and exhibits a vitality for life that has been to the great benefit of our village during those 17 years; baking for the fete, exhibiting at the show and surreptitiously weeding and tidying the Chapel grounds were all part of Nan's life here. And then there was Meals on Wheels - delivering, of course, not receiving. Ask for a volunteer and Nan was always the first!

If she had no transport for getting to the 81st Club at Lacey Green, then she would do the obvious thing for any 80 year old - and walk there!



Nan was a great friend and neighbour to us all. Speen will miss her, but we all wish her well on her return North o' th. Border; her new neighbours are fortunate to have such a lovely lady in their midst Jean and Geoff Morris (and so say us all - Ed)

THE ROUNDABOUT SUPERBLY RESTORED

So Jeanne gives well-deserved thanks to those involved and to others who help

Those who use the playing field regularly will have noticed that, finally, the roundabout has been restored. This was only possible through the voluntary efforts of **Keith Jones**, who dismantled the roundabout and reassembled it using salvaged parts plus new wood and metal which he had prepared and welded. **Roger Craft** then repainted it all.

We are extremely grateful to Keith and Roger; having been concerned about the state of the roundabout for two years but without funds to get it repaired by the makers, it seemed that we might just have to remove it completely.

Many thanks also to **Gloria Holmes and friends** for the £116.70 raised by their fun bridge

lunch and to the Horticultural Society for the £168 from their open garden afternoons.

It would have been a great shame to have lost this roundabout, which has been there for about 25 years and is of an old style no longer made - more fun than modern types.

We still need safety surfacing around the roundabout, the best of which costs £50 a square metre. Grants are usually only available for new projects, so we may not get one for this replacement.

We try to keep expenses down, wherever possible, undertaking general maintenance on the pavilion and hedges etc ourselves. I would be very pleased to receive your offers of help, if you feel able. This

is a good point at which to say thank you **Mandy**, for regularly emptying those rubbish bins on the field!

Once again, could we please ask dog owners not to allow their pets onto the field, which is now covered under the by-laws regarding dog fouling and can attract a fine of £500.

Please continue to support our fundraising and, again, many thanks to those who helped us with the roundabout project. **We are always in need of new committee members, and the field belongs to all of us, so please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to get involved.**

JEANNE HANFORD
(488402)

NORTH DEAN FETE

5th August was a sunny day for David Davies (Chair of Hughenden Parish Council) to open the fete. His wife was presented with an arrangement of flowers in a basket by Stephanie Booth, whose birthday it was. The Piggotts Band then played "Happy Birthday" to her. Next came the judging of the Fancy Dress, which was well attended.

The Marquee with the exhibits was very impressive, with a fine display of vegetables and flowers - quite surprising considering the hot summer! The stalls offset with with coloured umbrellas, were very busy. The Bric-a-Brac and Tombola were

the main attractions of the afternoon. The Bar Tent was a welcome relief for the thirsty, as was a cup of tea and a lovely cake to relax with in the Village Hall, out of that hot sun! An additional attraction this year was the Booze Spinner - very colourful and made by a committee member. As always, for the children was the Bouncey Castle. The only things which marred the afternoon were the wasps. *Fortunately I was prepared - with my onion - to kill the stings.*

We had a good attendance, but not as many as last year; maybe through people being away at the start of school holidays?

With the music from the Piggotts Band, the people in their summery clothes and the sound of the **excited voices of the children and adults enjoying themselves, and in the beautiful surroundings of North Dean - all made it such a happy event.**

Finally, many thanks to the volunteers and the committee for all their efforts towards making the Fete a success. We were very pleased with the profit of over £1000 after expenses; which will help towards the refurbishment of the Village Hall.

PAM PYLE (Hon Treasurer for North Dean Committee)

SARAH PYLE, LIVED IN N. DEAN - NOW LIVES IN OZ.

Sarah Mullen (nee Pyle) was born on 25th June 1969 and lived at North Dean. She went to school at Speen and then to Lacey Green School where she passed the 12-plus to go to Lady Verney High School. She left there at 16 and took a catering course at Aylesbury College. Having qualified, she became first a Chef and later a Chef Manager. Her marriage, at twenty one, didn't work out, but

later she met a young computer engineer at the Catering Unit where she worked. They have since become engaged while on a working holiday in Australia. Her fiancé then got a permanent job with his company in Australia and they have both emigrated to live there. Sarah has also obtained a job in that country, as a Chef Manager. They went to Australia on the 21st August this year and they are settling in very well.

Roger and Pam Pyle
(Sarah's parents)

SPEEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

gets a copy of the monthly magazine **THE GARDEN**, which comes with our joint membership of the RHS. Ted Drew puts it in my mailbox, I attach a circulation list and put it through the door of one person on the list. The latest I've had is September. **If any members wish to be added to the list then let me know** (some get their own copy). May I apologise to one of our members, Dave - I didn't know until later that the bee which stung him as I was taking a photo put him briefly in hospital. Get rid of them Dave!

Peter 488222

Bucks Housing

19TH SEPTEMBER - VILLAGE HALL

Jean Gabbitas opened the meeting, again to a packed hall of an estimated 120 residents, there to hear the other side of the argument. Apparently council houses are no longer being built unless for special reasons, therefore housing associations now meet the need for social housing.

Jane Fleming of the Bucks Housing Association spoke of the need to provide the highest standard of housing for those most in need. For the past four years they have been involved in the shop site, and she admitted at first they wanted "Tree Tops", but lost out to a developer. "We have no hidden agenda" she insisted, and stated that they do not want to buy the other vacant land behind the present site.

Many people seemed reassured when told that the houses are likely to go to needy Speen residents or ex residents, and they have already more applications from locals than they can fill. "We are not going to house the 'hoi polloi', swamp the school, or swell the number of burglaries in the area".

As to the shop, no rates will be required, and it will be run on a non-

profit making basis, with a full time manager, paid for by the Association. The manager will recruit volunteers to help serve. Half of the profit will go to the village for community purposes, the other half into a fund overseen by the Association for other community schemes. "The success of the shop depends on you", declared Mrs Fleming; this was accompanied by many shouts of "NO" from the floor.

On the issue of the 'Right to buy' act, it was stated the Association will not opt for this status, therefore, the tenants will have no right to buy, and indeed the Association have a legal binding contract to keep the scheme in perpetuity as cheap rental housing.

Martin Crook, the Associations planning advisor, stated the site is a "Exception site", that is why high density housing can be tolerated. There will be four 3 bedroom houses and one 2 bedroom house attached to the shop, each house having 2 car parking spaces, and 3 spaces outside the shop.

The meeting was then opened for questions, and again they came thick and fast. "What about the roof size, is it compatible to properties around?" - Yes apparently.

"Could not 'Tree Tops' be developed in the same high density by a private developer?" - "No, shop site is

'Exception site' and does not create a precedent".

"What happens to shop if it is not viable?" - "As long as it breaks even within three years it will continue, otherwise it could be turned into another house".

"Why did you buy the land without planning permission?" - "Because it is cheaper, and we take the risk".

Many other questions were put regarding the access and vision splay of the site. It was said that the plans complied with the Highway authorities, and that parents worried about their children crossing should perhaps escort them to and from the school bus.

A separate report had been produced, and was presented by Mr. Rogerson from 'Project Planning', which concluded that the Bucks Housing Association plan is wholly out of character with the village in terms of its density, design and overall appearance.

The next Residents Association meeting is set for 26th September. The planning application should be heard in October. Subject to it being passed, the first work to be done will be to clear the site. It is possible for the building work to start before Christmas, but if the application is delayed, building will probably begin in March.

IRENE TINSLEY

NEWS FROM THE TWINNING ASSOCIATION

This is the quiet season with little to report. We held our AGM back in June, at which the new committee was elected. Our previous Chairman (Pat Williams), Secretary (Mike Piercy) and Treasurer (Mike Davis) all stood down, leaving a substantial gap.

Tom Davies, who circulates the Twinning Newsletter and collects subscriptions in Speen, isn't actually on the committee. Don White is an ex-officio member, representing the Parish Council. *We still don't have anyone on the committee directly representing our 28 Speen members,* and we really would like someone to

take on this not terribly arduous task. Any volunteers?

The programme for the forthcoming year has been broadly worked out, although some detail is still to be resolved. The French children visit us probably in April, we go to Hambye in May.

Two events in the near future for your diaries, both at Lacey Green Village Hall:

Sunday 15th October 1995 - 12.30 pm. "Meet 'n Greet" - Informal lunch, bring your own liquid refreshment £4.00 - Get to know another twinner! If you aren't already a member, this is a good opportunity to find out what 'its' all about.

Saturday 4th November 1995 -

1.30pm Jumble Sale

If you have any jumble you would like to contribute, we will receive it at Lacey Green Village Hall during the morning. We also hope to have a produce stall.

In 1996 the first event is our Fun Quiz on 20th January at which teams of eight compete with one another. There will be supper and a bar. We don't think that we have had a team from Speen previously and Jude Awdry has been persuaded to organise one this time (the Spinners?)

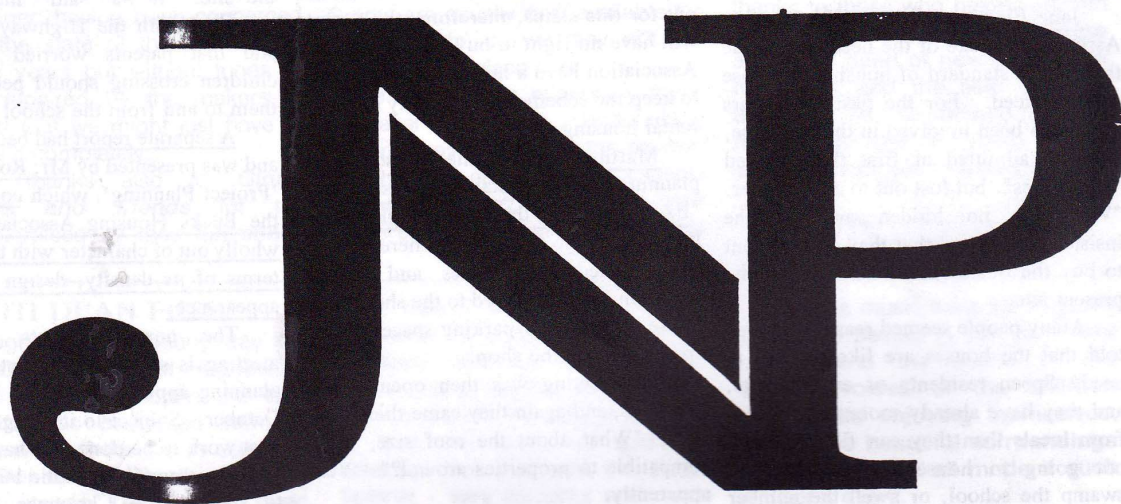
For more information about twinning generally, contact me on 01844 344975

A bientot

TONY MOLESWORTH

JENKINS NEWMAN

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THE OLD PLOW BISTRO/RESTAURANT

AT SPEEN

BARFOOD AND BISTRO MENU

Light meals and starters

- * Gazpacho-chilled Summer soup with cucumber, tomato, garlic £3.95
- * French smokes chicken and fresh pineapple £4.95
- * Avocado and brie salad with papaya £4.95
- * Farmhouse cheeses with grapes and crudites £4.95
- * Hot stilton, onion and herbed tart with tossed salad £5.95
- * Scotch oak smoked salmon platter £6.95
- * Old Plow antipasta with mussels, prawns, squid, smoked salmon etc. £6.95
- * Melon and giant prawns salad with Marie Rose sauce £6.95
- * Avocado and giant prawns salad £6.95
- * Cold asparagus and home-dried tomatoes and sauce gribiche £5.95

Main meals

- * Steaming bowl Thai noodles with fillet steak, prawns and mussels £5.95
- * Pasta with wild mushrooms, tomatoes and capers £7.95
- * Grilled breast chicken with curry and coconut sauce £7.95
- * Crispy duck's leg with Japanese black bean sauce and vegetables £8.95
- * Cold scotch salmon and prawns with mayonnaise, rocket salad and new potatoes £8.95
- * Char-grilled fresh tuna steak, basil and lemon butter sauce, salad and new potatoes £7.95
- * Catalan seafood casserole with almonds, tomatoes, garlic and olive oil £8.95
- * Grilled giant prawns, lemon butter and pesto sauce and tossed salad £9.95
- * Half dozen Mediterranean prawns, tossed salad and Marie Rose sauce £9.95
- * Grilled loin lamb with Bengal cracked wheat salad infused with mint and parsley £8.95
- * Grilled Aberdeen Angus fillet steak with spicy butter £13.95

Plus

- * Cold lobster mayonnaise and salad; half = £8.50, whole = £16.50
- * Seafood platter; lobster, prawns, mussels and squid, £12.95
- * Grilled sardines with lemon and seed mustard sauce, tossed salad and french bread £5.95
- * Grilled calves liver with caramelised onions and bacon and fresh vegetables £8.95

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.

Introducing the *Speen Residents Association*

On behalf of the recently re-formed Speen Residents Association, I would like to thank all those who have taken the time to attend our two meetings and to offer their views. It is personally encouraging to see that the residents of Speen take such an interest in village matters even when not directly affected.

As was stated at our first meeting, the Residents Association is open to all, funded purely by donations with any surplus returned to the village. It is suggested that for future matters a committee be formed to represent all parts of the village, probably on a geographical basis so as to ensure proper representation.

It is also felt important that one aim of the Association should be to assist the Parish Council wherever it is possible so they can be advised more readily of village opinion and views.

Turning to the Speen Stores application, this is now to be heard at either the 1st or the

13th November meeting of the Wycombe District Planning Committee, which gives more time for your views.

I have received a response to my letter to Charles Winter-Taylor (Chairman of Bucks Housing), in which he confirms the support to be given by Bucks Housing, and those items which, through patronage of the shop, will be paid for as an overhead.

The support by Bucks Housing is as stated by Mrs Fleming at her meeting - to provide a rate and rent free shop, to appoint a manager, to recruit volunteers, to provide an interest free loan, and in addition to provide all of the setting-up costs.

Costs to be paid for out of overheads are the running costs, including insurance, spoiled goods, heat, light and maintenance; these being in addition to the costs of the manager. Items such as the repayment of the interest-free loan, power for equipment, telephone, transport, accounts etc. are not mentioned directly.

On the subject of a business plan, Mr Winter-Taylor advised that this is a confidential document, and since Bucks Housing Association Ltd. is assuming all the risk, it should not concern the village. He also advises that until there is an appropriate planning permission, the subject is somewhat premature.

With regard to the proposal, at the meeting of 26th September, by Mr Winter-Taylor, to install an entrepreneur to run the shop, he confirms that this is not the intention.

During the past month, other issues have been put forward for debate. The most notable that concern the village as a whole being traffic speed through the village, especially at the Chapel Hill/Hampden Road junction, and a Green Belt application at Flowers Bottom. If you do have a view, then the Residents Association would be pleased to hear it.

Thank you for your interest.

PAUL ROGERSON Acting
Chairman S.R.A.

AMENDMENTS TO GOOD NEIGHBOURS ITEM

Contact for assistance should be made with the following:

Doris Wilson 488334, Margaret Jones 488246 or Poppy Ellis 488548.

Gloria also wishes to point out that several teenagers successfully completed a Red Cross Babysitters course and now offer a babysitting service through the Good Neighbours scheme.

Speen Playing Field : a brief history

During the recent school holidays, my daughter was working on a project about Speen Playing Field as part of her geography coursework. This entailed reading through old records and minutes dating back to the very early days of the Playing Field Association. Since the village has owned the field for exactly sixty years, I thought some readers might be interested to read something about the background.

Originally the field belonged to Wheelers Wycombe Breweries Ltd., and the four gentlemen (or Trustees) who bought it for the village were Major James Caldwell, Roy Lorentz Daniell, Randolph Wood and Walter Ward. It cost £160. (The small section where the pavilion now stands remained the property of the brewery until 1971, when it was bought for £1750.) Here is a facsimile of the main points of the Trust Deed, which was signed on 11th October 1935.

SPEEN PLAYING FIELD TRUST DEED 11th OCTOBER 1935

Summary of main points:

Conveyance between Wheelers Wycombe Breweries Ltd and The Trustees.

Price £160

Purpose - playing field and recreation ground.

Area - 2 acres 3 rods 20 perches.

First offer for resale to be made to vendors and accepted within 1 calendar month. Management and control vested in Trustees and committee elected annually at Village Meeting held first Friday in February or other convenient date in that month.

Vacancies may be filled at any time by a majority of committee. Must be resident in village. May permit field to be used, for payment or otherwise. All money so obtained to be used in payment of debt or interest, or in laying out and maintaining property. Committee meetings at least twice a year. 5 to a quorum. Majority vote. Chairman has casting vote. Minute book to be kept. Sub-committees may be

formed. Power of appointing new Trustee vested in Committee.

First Schedule:

1. No intoxicating liquor to be sold.
2. No buildings other than Club House Pavilion or Tool Shed.
3. Boundary fence to be erected, maintained by Trustees.
4. Entrance gate in boundary fence Portion sold to Banatto's for £50.

The first committee members were: Esmond Wiley (Chairman), Walter Wood (Secretary), Arthur Hulton (treasurer), Sarah Dawson, Ethel Ward, Elsie Rutland, Sidney Floyd, Harold Janes and Alfred Ridgley.

The idea of buying the land came about during the Jubilee celebrations of George Fifth, and for a long time the field was known as the Speen Jubilee Memorial Playing Field. The Committee applied for grants from the King George's Jubilee Trust, and the National Playing Fields Association. They were awarded £10, £20. and £5. respectively.

The first few annual reports show that no time was lost in raising funds and putting the field to good use. (1936 seems to be missing).

December 1935

"... purchase money for the playing field was raised by accepting loans of £5 or multiples of £5 bearing interest at 4% pa.

"... in addition to the loans of £150 we were given subscriptions and donations amounting to £32.5.0 Profit from the Whist Drive was £2.12.8 ..."

"... We intend in the early spring to proceed with the equipment and layout of the field."

"... Plans for further efforts include a fete to be held at the White House of Speen ... kindly loaned by Major J. Caldwell JP."

December 1937

"In addition to amenities already provided (cricket, swings and see-saws), a tennis court has now been laid down ..."

"... maintenance cost was £5.16s.5d for cutting long grass, thereafter all mowing done by voluntary labour...In suitable

weather the Village School continues to use the Playing Field for organised sports."

December 1938

"... our income has exceeded our expenditure by £32.16s11d...This has enabled us to redeem one half of the loans..."...Maintenance costs very low only expense being £2.6s0d, being 50% of motor mower expenses (other 50% met by local cricket club)"...Equipment to value of £16.10s4d added this year..stop nets for tennis court, roller and trailer, and has two garden seats...The playing field is at all times a favourite rendezvous for the juvenile inhabitants."

December 1939

"The outbreak of War brought a considerable number of evacuee children to the locality, and the playing field proved to be of immense value for their entertainment...Ambitious plans for remodelling tennis court and motor-rolling the field did not materialise owing to the dry season, and the series of international situations had a braking effect on our activities...Again the field was used for cricket matches...and continues to be used by the Village School...and still remains a favourite rendezvous for the juvenile inhabitants."

December 1940

"Revenue limited to £2.10s8d...due to social effort made in aid of various war funds...The population of Speen considerably increased due to influx of evacuees...the field has been of immense value for their pleasure and entertainment...our balance of liabilities is £193.14s2d..."

Despite being sixty years on, very little if anything has changed fundamentally. There continue to be many and varied activities to suit everybody, and while today's annual reports may be less quaint in style and language, the committee members are as hardworking and dedicated as ever!

JENNY AND RUTH COWAN

ANOTHER GREAT BEECHDEAN WEEKEND

(despite changeable weather, "£5 to get in" and a rampaging Highland calf)

The Wild West came to North Dean on September 16th when two of the barns where Jim Kent keeps his cows were converted for a **Country and Western Evening**.

A great scenario was arranged and, for one whose knowledge of Cowboys and Indians is confined to "High Chapparel" etc., I thought the atmosphere at this shindig was marvellous! The dusty floors, the saddles decorating rails in the big barn, the straw bales for the energetic dancers to collapse on, the Bucking Bronco and everything else added to the pleasure.

Karen and Sally, who had just completed their sponsored "Ride for Hope" from Tarr Steps in Somerset home to North Dean, were presented with a soft cushion each (probably needed!) and a glorious bouquet each in acclamation of their efforts.

Three bands were performing

during the evening; as befitted the evening, the first was a Country and Western band called "Kevin Stewart and the First Chapter", and Alison Thomas had everyone toeing the line while she called the Line-Dancing. (Andrew, Jez, Nick, Ian and Simon gave a memorable demonstration of how it was supposed to be done!) The second ensemble was a Rock band called "Last Resort", a name they most obviously haven't earned as they would be first on anyone's list! The first was a trio called "Rude Mood", who set the mood for the late-stayers, playing until around 3am.

Dress was strictly casual, with Cowboy hats of all shapes and sizes much in evidence; saloon gals, a Mexican in poncho and large sombrero, an Indian squaw and, incongruously, one fellow dressed in a dinner jacket (must

have been a good reason for that!?)

A super buffet was well organised, lots to eat and a big bar dispensing bottles of beer to hundreds of thirsty "Westerners".

The Raffle (for which all prizes were donated by local companies) featured a first prize of two tickets to Paris, won by a very happy Katherine Bowen.

Congratulations to Andrew Howard and all his helpers (tho' I understand he got a bit "tied-up" near the end of the evening). With the Barbecue and Dance and Family Fun Day on Sunday, over £2,200 was raised. Sally and Karen's sponsorship for the Ride has raised over £6,000 so far, with more pledges expected. It is hoped that the funds will top the £10,000 mark and these will be shared equally between the Roy Castle "Cause for Hope" Appeal and Farm Africa.

Well done, everyone!

The Family Fun Day at Beechdean Dairies got off to a damp start; however the showers didn't dampen the spirits of Andrew Howard and the rest of the Beechdean crew who, in spite of having been awake until around 4 am, were up and about early organising the activities.

Despite being advertised wrongly in some local press as "£5 admission" many people came along anyway and were pleasantly surprised to find it was only a pound for anyone over five years. A tractor and trailer carried them back

and forth from the car park site (some delighted young ones did this part several times!)

There was a barbecue and bar, live music, rally karts, a bouncy castle and some friendly farm animals (though a Highland calf making an escape bid ended up in the goat-pen!) The ice cream shop was very well attended, even in the rain. Other things to see included farm machinery, craft stalls, a vintage Model-T van and more. Unfortunately the Quasar Centre failed to bring their advertised Sega

games and the weather did not suit ballooning, but everyone enjoyed themselves and the atmosphere was excellent.

The 1170AM/Beechdean Radio Roadshow was there for the last Roadshow of the summer, "Home to Home Farm"; they talked to the staff and visitors, played music and generally joined in the fun.

Happily the sun shone in the early afternoon, bringing out more families. Korean TV paid a visit to film an English farm interacting with the public - it seems they could not have picked a better day!

SPEEN PLAYGROUP - "encouraging their development"

We have started the new term with loads of enthusiasm. New blood has been injected by way of new children (and their parents) and new committee members. Many thanks to our outgoing committee staff; your efforts have been much appreciated.

Everyone is again working hard raising funds to provide a telephone point in the village hall for playgroup use. The telephone is essential for emergency and other cover.

We are holding a Halloween party in aid of the TELEPHONE FUND on 31st October, between 4.30 pm and 6 pm in the Village Hall. Tickets are £2 per child,

including games, fancy dress competition and tea. Any local family with children up to 8 years is most welcome to come.

There are some trips arranged for the Autumn term, with more being planned. The children are about to take part in the Harvest Service at Speen Baptist Church as part of joining other sections of the village community. This is to help broaden the children's horizons and increase their knowledge of their own environment, and which is integral to the Playgroup's curriculum. We hope that all the fun and "play" at the Playgroup is purposeful and encouraging their development.

An event I would like to give early

notice of is the **Playgroup Reunion**. In the Spring the committee hopes to arrange an event including as many "Old Boys and Girls" as possible, regardless of their present age. Please spread the word and watch out for further details.

The Playgroup opens every weekday during term time, between nine and noon at the Village Hall. Contact me if you have a child approaching three and might like them to join a friendly, stimulating and fun playgroup that links closely with the village school.

**ANNABELLE PATCHING
562895**

A WI Fax from the airport

My first reaction to reading the note from Peter that he wanted my report "within a few days" was "Forget it!", as we were off to the Far East next day. But I relented - to let you know what we, at the WI, have been up to lately.

Well fete day did turn out nice, but we didn't sell the usual number of cakes (where was everyone?) So we froze a lot - which you may get on another Open Garden Day. They went well, incidentally, despite the scorching weather. We made £130 on the teas, which we sent to Macmillan Nurses.

Lady Felicity Harwood came to talk to us in July and gave an excellent account of life at No 10, when her father, Clement Atlee, was Prime Minister.

At the August meeting, Mrs Muriel Jones took us back to Wales during her childhood and eventual entry into the WI - in a talk called Leeks, Daffodils, Gymslips and Jerusalem.

At the end of August we gave our usual lunch for the Senior Citizens, who were then entertained by a

jolly baritone and his pianist wife.

Sadly, we had to say a fond farewell to Nan Andrew, who has now moved back to Scotland. We had a great barbecue in the Drews' garden before she left and Nan was delighted. We also gave her a cheque to buy something for her new garden. All the best Nan.

In September Mrs Medcroft gave an interesting talk on the Citizens' Advice Bureau, which she said was a misnomer, as they don't actually give advice themselves but let people know where to go for help - something we didn't realise.

Yesterday (16th September) the Bucks WI had a field rented over at Icknield Way, Bledlow, for a Car Boot Sale. We collected quite a bit of stuff and priced it all on Thursday night, but I haven't been able to find out how it went, as I didn't go (too near my holiday, you understand), so more in my next report.

Coming events: 5th October - Mrs Joy Davies - Cookery

2nd November -

Annual Meeting

7th December -

Mrs Claire Short - Embroidery for Christmas

Barbara Collett, WI Secretary.

When typing the December speaker, I briefly thought that the local WI had declared itself politically, but I don't quite associate the MP of that name with 'embroidery'! As for the car boot sale, it seems our lot arrived at the field with cars stuffed full of ~~junk~~ lovely stuff, only to find a notice saying that it was cancelled "owing to the weather" (albeit by then it was fine). Undeterred, they motored over to Tring just in time to get a place over there. It seems they were then practically "mugged" whilst getting the "lovely stuff" out of the cars and much of it went without getting on to the table. They made about £100. Barbara will no doubt correct any suggestion that they then blew it all at the nearest pub, when she writes her next report. Ed.

This Speen lady finds COLLECTING OLD DOLLS a hobby of many facets

I suppose the world is divided into collectors and minimalists - I'm a Collector; stamps and glass animals as a child, candles as a teenager and now DOLLS. But this is no passing fancy.

The first doll that came to stay was Edmund, a German bisque-headed baby doll - he's still my daughter's favourite. A friend of mine has collected dolls for over twenty five years, and whenever I stayed with her I would look at her collection and think - as their eerie little faces watched me - that she was mad! Then I got the bug! China, bisque, hard plastic and vinyl - all are welcome. To begin I was very ignorant, but after numerous trips to the library and several encyclopedias for birthdays and Christmas, my knowledge grew. Auction rooms and catalogues were another source of knowledge.

You do not collect dolls without becoming interested in old fabric and fashion - it makes doll collectors wince to think of all the beautiful fabrics and clothes that have gone to the tip, and in their

place a modern frilly horror. You learn about porcelain, china and glass, as some of the beautiful French dolls of the late 19th century had paperweight eyes. These eyes were made by the same craftsmen who served a seven year apprenticeship to become paperweight makers.

You also learn about illness and child mortality in the past - unfortunately many dolls were kept in pristine condition due to the demise of their poor little owner. There is also an insight into how children played - dolls were usually only a treat, to be played with after tea on Sunday. They were not the mass-produced disposable toys of today. These toys were treasured, loved and looked after. Often a doll would be an only child's friend - they were called Companion Dolls and could be as tall as 4.5 feet.

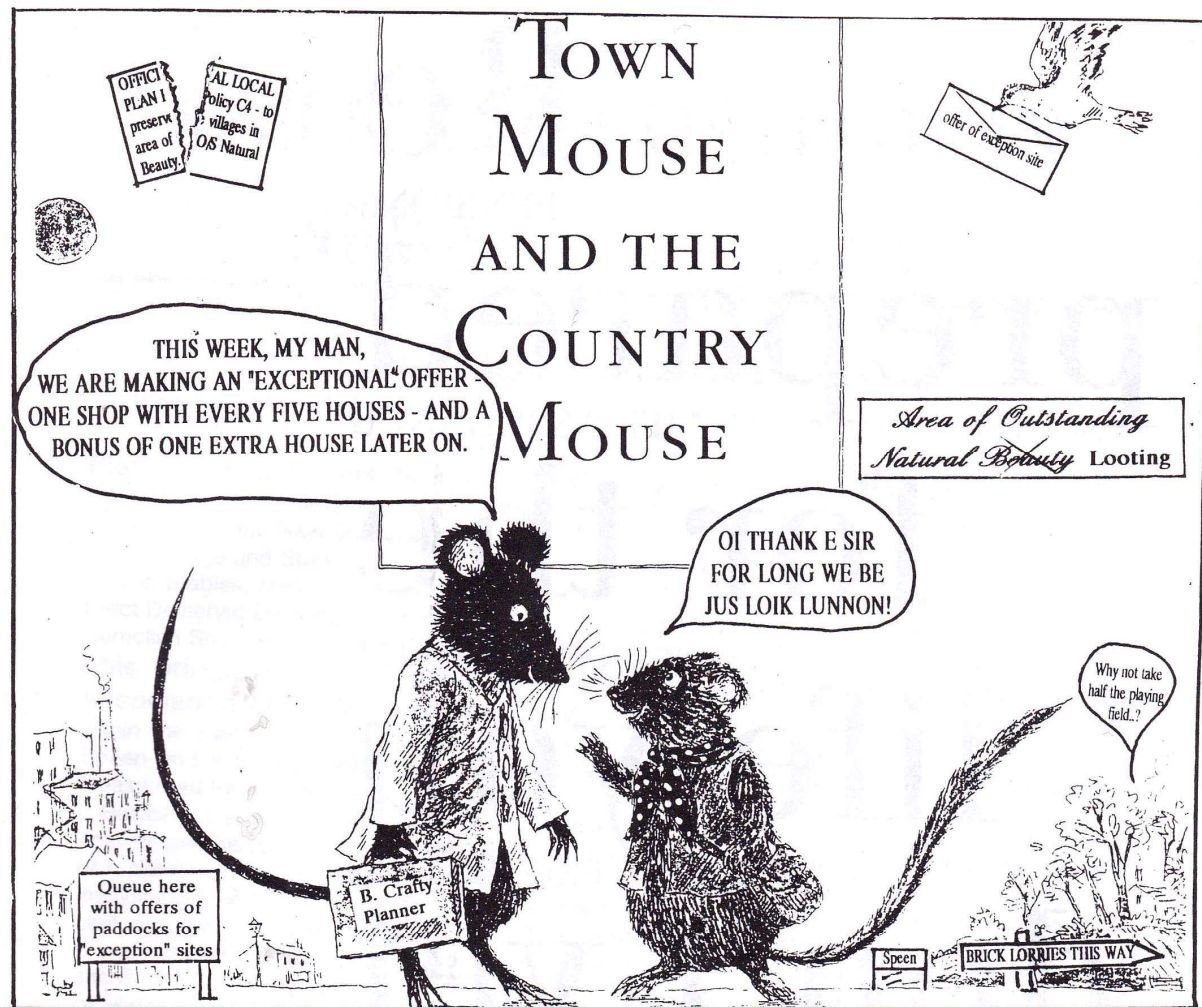
Through the centuries, **dolls have had many uses - not all pleasant!** They come in many shapes and sizes and any material you might think of. My special love is the bisque-headed dolls of the period 1890 - 1930.

Apart from a brief interlude during the 1st World War, Germany ruled supreme in the manufacture of these dolls. They were exported to virtually every country in the world.

I have now been on many courses and learned many skills connected with my beloved dollies; wig making, antique doll restoration, modern doll restoration, shoe and dress making and how to buy, handle and display. As my collection grew, my bank balance shrank! So now I repair and restring dolls for other people. I also give talks to schools and women's groups, which the majority find absolutely fascinating - my diary fills quickly.

I hope you enjoyed this glimpse into the world of dolls. If anyone else who collects dolls would be interested in forming a local group, I can be contacted via Gloria Holmes.

Name not published for security reasons (tell us more about those uses which were "not always pleasant" - Ed.)



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