


This newsletter is an amateur publication produced informally and at no charge
by and for the villagers of Speen and North Dean

Spring
1998

SPEEN AND NORTH DEAN NEWS

Issue
Number 13 



And where are they now?...see story inside



*Bucks Herald photographer with some of the villagers
who plan to be first to celebrate the new Millenium!*

Ref: Speen Shop Fund
 *1 April 1998

The Buckinghamshire
 Housing Association Ltd.

Peter Dawson
 Charvil Meadow
 Chapel Hill
 Speen
 Aylesbury
 Bucks

Dear Peter

Re: Distribution of Shop Proceeds

As you are undoubtedly aware the shop will be opening in the very near future. The Association has undertaken to donate the net rental proceeds back to the village and we are therefore seeking to set up a small committee which will meet no more than four times a year to oversee the fair distribution of any moneys.

This committee will operate under the auspices of Bucks HA Ltd who will be responsible for all the administration with the associated financial controls.

At a recent meeting it was agreed with representatives of the village that this committee should comprise:

- A Board member of Bucks HA Ltd
- A staff member of Bucks HA Ltd
- A Speen Parish Councillor
- A representative of the Fete Committee
- A neutral Chairman - The Reverend Gower has agreed to act in this capacity

I understand that you are Secretary of the Fete Committee and I should therefore be grateful if you would recruit the Fete Representative.

There is likely to be about £2,000 available to spend during the first year of business, with increasing amounts in the future. Although this is not a huge sum it does present a unique opportunity to support local initiatives which would not usually have access to financial support.

A first meeting of the Committee is programmed for late April and I should welcome an early response so that we can fix a date.

Thank you for your help and support.

Yours sincerely



Jane Fleming
Chief Executive

46a Lorton Street
 High Wycombe
 Bucks
 HP11 1DT

Tel 01494 532808
 Fax 01494 437911

• Volunteer needed.

**IF YOU RIDE, THIS IS GOOD NEWS, BUT THE OTHER
99% OF US WILL NEED TALL WELLIES!! Ed.**

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

**THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT**

**THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(PARISH OF GREAT AND LITTLE HAMPDEN
DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDER 1998**

This Order is made by Buckinghamshire County Council ("the Authority") under section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 ("the Act") because it appears to that authority that the Buckinghamshire County Council Definitive Map and Statement require modification in consequence of an occurrence of an event specified in section 53(3)(c)(ii) of the Act, namely the discovery by the authority of evidence which when considered with all other relevant evidence available shows that a highway shown in the map and statement as a highway of a particular description (footpath) ought to be shown as a highway of a different description (bridleway).

The authority have consulted with every local authority whose area includes the land to which the order relates. The Buckinghamshire County Council hereby order that:

1. For the purposes of this order the relevant date is *1st February 1998*
2. The Buckinghamshire County Council Definitive Map and Statement shall be modified as described in Part I and Part II of the Schedule and shown on the map attached to the order.
3. This order shall take effect on the date it is made and may be cited as the
The Buckinghamshire County Council (Parish of Great and Little Hampden)
Definitive Map Modification Order 1998.

SCHEDULE

PART I

Modification of Definitive Map

Description of path or way to be upgraded

From point A on the attached map at its junction with Hampden Road in the Parish of Great and Little Hampden in a generally north westerly direction for a distance of approximately 670 metres to point B on the said map at the junction of Public Bridleway No 30 Lacey Green, Public Bridleway No 8 Great and Little Hampden and Public Footpath No 10 Great and Little Hampden then continuing in a generally north-north-westerly direction for a distance of approximately 340 metres to point C on the said map then in a generally north-westerly direction for a distance of approximately 700 metres to point D on the said map at its junction with Public Bridleway No 14 Great and Little Hampden as shown by a continuous line with cross bars at intervals on the said map and having a minimum width throughout of 3.5 metres.

PART II

Modification of Definitive Statement Variation of particulars of path or way

Description of footpath to be upgraded to bridleway

From point A on the map annexed to the said order at its junction with Hampden Road in the Parish of Great and Little Hampden in a generally north westerly direction for a distance of approximately 670 metres to point B on the said map at the junction of Public Bridleway No 30 Lacey Green, Public Bridleway No 8 Great and Little Hampden and Public Footpath No 10 Great and Little Hampden then continuing in a generally north-north-westerly direction for a distance of approximately 340 metres to point C on the said map then in a generally north-westerly direction for a distance of approximately 700 metres to point D on the said map at its junction with Public Bridleway No 14 Great and Little Hampden as shown by a continuous line with cross bars at intervals on the said map and having a minimum width throughout of 3.5 metres.

THE COMMON SEAL of **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

COUNTY COUNCIL was hereunto affixed

this 2nd day of March

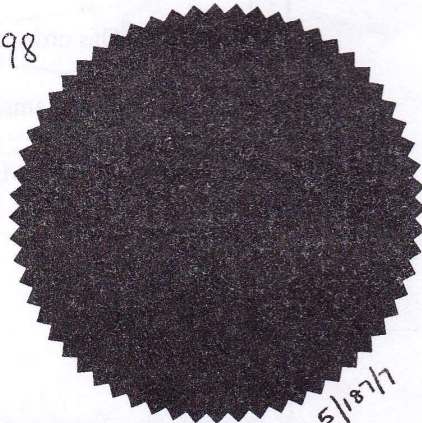
1998

in the presence of:-

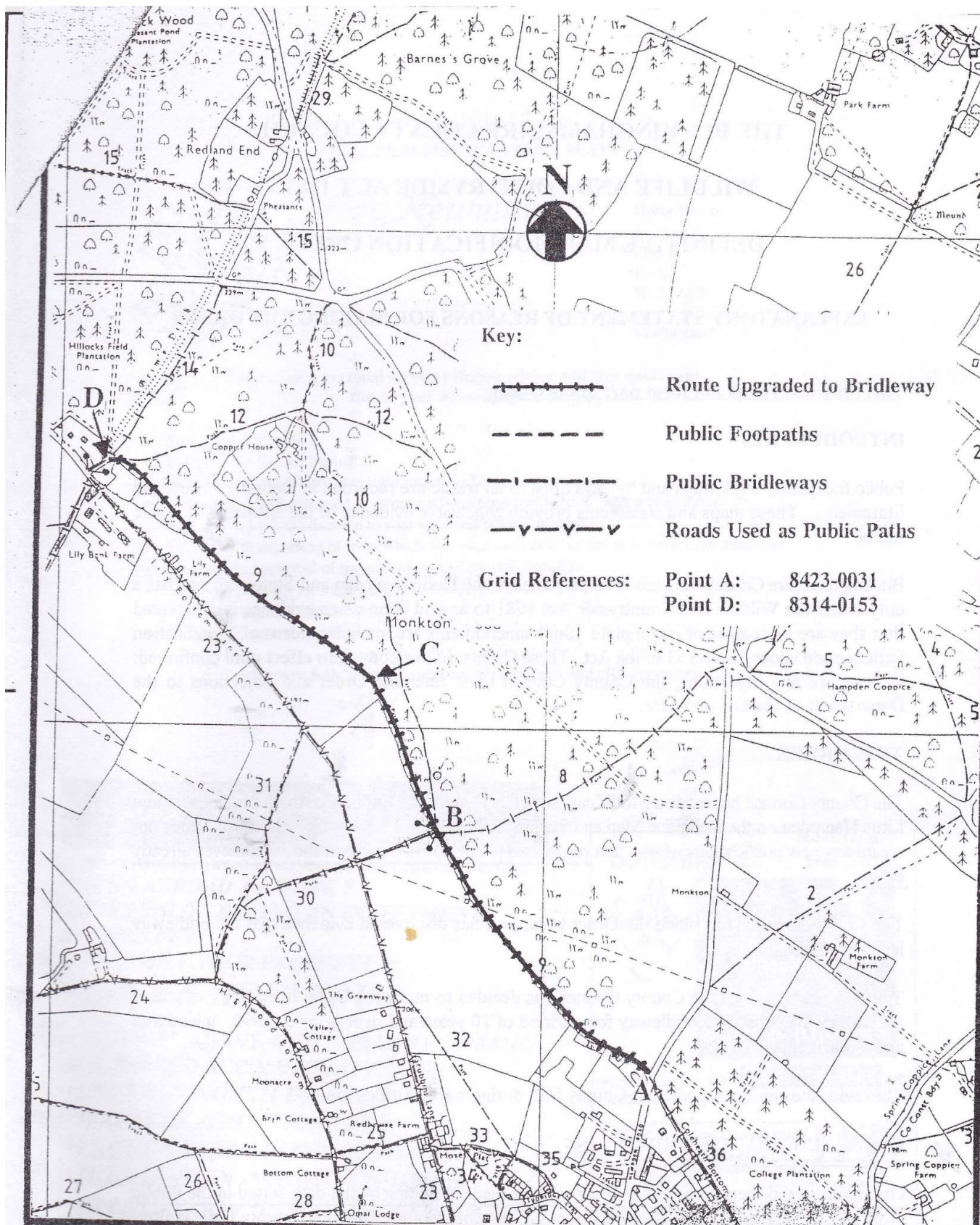
A. I. Loner

Member of the Council

Just a Relfe
Head of Legal Services



5/18/98



CHRIS M WILLIAMS
BA(Hons) MA MRTPI MIMgt
DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES
Buckinghamshire County Council

Upgrading to Public
Bridleway - Great
and Little Hampden

Scale: 1:10,000

File No. 16855WBK

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDER

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR MAKING THE ORDER

This Statement does not form part of the Order

INTRODUCTION

Public footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic are recorded in Definitive Maps and Statements. These maps and statements provide conclusive evidence of the existence of public rights.

Buckinghamshire County Council is responsible for the Definitive Map and Statement and has a duty under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to amend them when evidence is discovered that they are inaccurate or incomplete. Such amendments are made by means of Modification Orders made under Section 53 of the Act. These Orders do not come into effect until confirmed: if there are any objections, the County Council must refer the Order and objections to the Department of the Environment.

THIS ORDER

The County Council has made a Modification Order to upgrade Public Footpath No.9 Great and Little Hampden on the Definitive Map and Statement, to a public bridleway. This Order does not create any new public rights of way, but recognises public rights that the authority believes already exist.

The County Council has made the Order because it has discovered evidence that the bridleway legally exists.

The evidence on which the County Council has decided to make the Order is evidence of use of the path by the public as a bridleway for a period of 20 years and over prior to 1992, unhindered and unchallenged.

This evidence can be inspected at County Hall during normal office hours.



OBJECTING TO THE ORDER



Objections or representations to the Order must be made in writing by the date stated in the Public Notice to the Head of Legal Services, Buckinghamshire County Council, County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UA.

* To be relevant, objections or representations should relate to the question of the existence or status of the right of way. *

Representations or objections relating to such matters as the need for the path, security or privacy are not relevant to the evidence and cannot be taken into account.

The County Council is willing to discuss the concerns of anyone considering objecting or making representations relating to the Order. Please telephone Mrs Freeman on Aylesbury (01296) 383951.

The right of objection to an Order is a statutory right but should be exercised in a reasonable way. The costs involved in dealing with objections are normally awarded against objectors only in cases of unreasonable behaviour.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

If there are no objections to the Order, or if all objections are withdrawn, the County Council will confirm the Order and the Definitive Map and Statement will be modified accordingly.

If objections are made and these are not withdrawn, the County Council must refer the Order and the objections to the Secretary of State for the Environment who will appoint an independent Inspector to consider the Order and hear the objections, normally by holding a Public Inquiry. The Inspector may then decide to confirm the Order with or without modifications, or may decide that it should not be confirmed.

Readers Write

Dear Editor,



May we, through this newsletter, express our concern at the proposed upgrading to a bridleway of the footpath from Hampden Road to Lily Bottom Lane via the edge of Monkton Wood.

Historically this has always been a footpath, never a bridleway. This is supported by old maps, county records and the oral witness evidence of some of our oldest residents; some with a memory of the village going back over eighty years.

The fact that some horse riders, some with a commercial interest, chose to ignore the legalities of this issue is no reason to change the footpath's status.

This is perhaps the most popular and most used footpath around the village - it provides access to the woods. Without horses churning up the surface it would also be one of the most pleasant. With its illegal use by horse riders, however, it becomes just a muddy morass, almost impassable to walkers, even in the comparatively dry period we have been experiencing. Where walkers have gone off the footpath to escape the heavy mud, the horses have followed - there is no escape!

We would urge all those who value this footpath to write a letter of objection to the County Council.

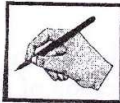
The law needs to be upheld and reinforced, not changed to suit a minority who chose to ignore the law.

Jean and Ted Drew

(See copy of Council Order of Modification etc elsewhere in this issue if you want to write. Bear in mind, if you want to save this footpath, that highly motivated horse riding interests have already convinced the Council that this is de facto already a bridleway. So if walkers don't bother to object it will be interpreted by the Council that a majority are happy with their decision. The Council had already shown a bias when they made Hampden Estate saw up a heavy log they had placed on the path near the lower entrance, which if left would have stopped horses whilst allowing walkers to squeeze past. Since then, a small group of horse riders have worked hard to destroy the surface and present it as evidence that the path has been used as a bridleway much more than was truthfully the case until very recently. Ed).

Dear Editor,

Watch out Speen, you're about to lose your favourite footpath



Permit me to alert your readers to a loss of amenity they are about to suffer. The popular footpath alongside Monkton Wood is about to be hi-jacked by a small but influential group of horse riders who have convinced the County Council that they have made improper use of the footpath for so long that they now deserve to be rewarded by having it declared a bridleway. You will see the official Notice posted on a telegraph pole at the lower entrance to the wood.

This will be a disaster, not just for you people in Speen, but for all the thousands of us walkers from outside the area, who normally walk the path, hoping to do so in normal walking boots. If the horse riding minority get their way over this, and it seems maybe they have, then the footpath will just become another linear quagmire just like the bridleway which crosses the path further up. In short they get it and everyone else loses it.

Name and address supplied.

Editor's response:

Thank you for pointing this out to me. I have obtained a copy of the "Modification Order" from County Hall, read it and am now wondering what on earth any of us can do about this apparent coup by the riding lobby. The order seems to make a very narrow definition of what constitutes grounds for objection. But let's examine one or two things which are claimed: **Firstly** the Council says that the path is a minimum of 3.5 metres wide. Well in theory, maybe, but not in actual fact when you examine the path itself. Particularly at the upper end, between points C and D on the Council drawing, the space available for passage is often less than half a metre. Presumably facts matter. In theory horses cannot use this footpath but they do. In theory

there is 3.5 metres of width, but there isn't. Does that make the score one each? (Presumably if the Council wished they could remove the huge trees and old holly bushes which have defined the path for generations, so as to make it fit the presently fictional minimum width mentioned in their Order?)

Secondly the Council also claim that use by horse riders has gone unchallenged. Well that is totally untrue. I have walked this path on a nearly daily basis since 30th August 1985 and I've witnessed the many efforts made by Hampden Estate to keep horses off. A whole variety of barriers and notices have been erected with this in mind, but they have then been vandalised. I personally saw a lady doing damage to one such barrier at point D some few years ago, whilst her horse was held by another lady. Even cast iron notices proclaiming "NO BRIDLEWAY" have been removed. Once it seemed that the improper use by riders would come to a stop when the Hampden Estate people placed a heavy tree trunk partly across the path at point A. Would you believe it, the Council told them to remove it because it was "an obstruction". Well of course it was an obstruction - to horses - but there was still room for walkers to get past. **This shameful act by the Council is probably the most significant step towards the position today,** whereby the Council now seem to want to hand it over to the tiny but destructive horse riding lobby.

When I spoke to Mrs Freeman, who is handling matters to do with objections, on the telephone, she implied immediately that she was not concerned with morality so much as with the legal niceties. Apparently this is some sort of game whereby even the guilty can win against the overall interest of society provided they know how to "cheat cleverly", it seems. And it does no harm, apparently, to have the Council on your side as you do

so.

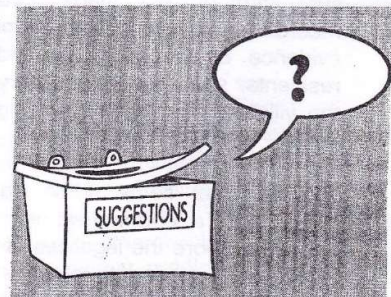
When I pointed out, to Mrs Freeman, that the Council had not even consulted the appropriate local community, she once again was only concerned with the precise rules; the footpath is in the neighbouring parish. So consultation was only with the Hamden Parish Council, even though the actual people of that parish live nowhere near to the footpath in question. The people of Speen do live near it and we must prove that we value this ancient footpath by making our individual objections.

Neither was Mrs Freeman at all interested in the historical argument, the fact that this footpath is one of the earliest recorded in English history seems to count for nothing. For those who don't know it is part of the "Blaccan Hegcean" (Black Hedge) referred to in complete detail in the Anglo Saxon Chronicles of the tenth century. There even exists a map showing that the path is exactly where it was those thousand years ago (read The Chilterns, published 1989 and obtainable in Bucks libraries).

However, all may not be lost. If objections are made then these must be considered by the Department of the Environment. There could then be an enquiry held and - who knows - this ancient and important footpath could be saved for Buckinghamshire walkers for another one thousand years.

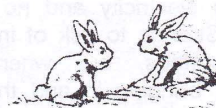
But do nothing and we lose it.

Ed.



MONKTON FARM REVISITED

Martin Clark goes back to his roots



I met Martin at Peter Symonds' slide show in February. He told me that he spent his first ten years at Monkton Farm, where the farmhouse is situated several hundred yards back from Spring Coppice Lane. He and his family had left the farm in the middle of world war two and Martin had not been back since. It was obvious he longed to see it again.

I had recently met with Yvonne Butt who with her husband has lived at the farm for the past twenty years and I knew that Martin would be welcome to revisit. So it was arranged with a couple of phone calls that he and Mrs Clark should go there this Monday morning 23rd February. Martin Hart and I also went along from the newsletter.

Ignoring the slight drizzle, we first walked around the outside of the farmhouse with Martin pointing out which features were the same and which had changed. Inside a barn across the yard the entrance to the loft was still there but no longer were the animal feeding troughs, hay dispensers and the slab where meat was salted down after being smoked in the yard. The hooks on which it hung were also missing. The whole ambience of this barn was now like that of a small village hall, complete with ancient record player on a table in the corner. Some rather faded coloured lights suggested that things were celebrated here a few decades ago. A beam displayed the date 1861 carved into it. More original and basic was the other barn. Beyond the huge old wooden door we could see right up into the rafters. This barn is well occupied by a considerable flock of pigeons; some fantails among them. It seems that the pigeons were not put there by the Butts, but just arrived in ones and twos. It's not that the Butts dislike pigeons, they did set up a dovecote on the lawn, but the pigeons insisted on more spacious accommodation. Eventually the deposits on the barn floor

convinced them that the pigeons had to go. They were driven out and the barn door shut. But they then just hung about on the ridge outside in disconsolate little groups. So it was "okay you win" and hotel Monkton was reopened to the little monsters. At least they bring some life to the scene and their cooing is therapeutic I suppose.

Martin was by now getting very excited, pointing out even where the various piles of manure were stacked. It seems that the drains never worked and had to be flushed out quite regularly. There had been in his day a very large pond stretching from just outside the house for about seventy feet. From this the animals would drink. Wild ducks often flew in to stay awhile. Also close to the house were the cow sheds (now long since converted to a row of stables and presently housing two horses which used to be ridden by Mr and Mrs Butt's daughters before they grew up and moved away). Although farmers in those pre-war days didn't go much in for ornamental gardening it is perhaps not surprising that Mr Clark senior made exception for a large mock orange bush, the powerful midsummer perfume from which must have gone somewhere to ameliorate the pungent farmyard aromas.

Martin pointed out where the orchards once stood. Like every Chiltern farm there were of course the cherry trees which grow so well in these hills. The crop was sold to Aldridges of High Wycombe, for many years a famous high street fruiterer. There was also a very early variety of apple which ripened before all others. Most of these old varieties are now extinct, I believe. Occasionally you do still see an ancient cherry still hanging on in the gardens of modern houses built on the old orchard land. Of course the hills will never be without the sight of cherry blossom clouds in the early spring due to the extent to

which they feature in local woods. Sometimes one finds a wild tree with fruit much larger than one might expect; no doubt carrying the genes from some long gone cherry orchard ancestor.

Martin was pleased to see that his favourite conker tree was still alive and well, but long avenues of limes and Scots pines were no longer evident. There must have been a fashion for that combination of trees locally, because Speen residents can still see the remains of such an avenue there by preservation order inland from Chapel Hill (including a mighty lime tree dominating the end of my own garden).

Incidentally, it seems that Martin's father planted all those larches which are only now being felled in College Plantation. He did this in 1920 and at the same time planted the oak trees - or rather he planted acorns. However, before the larch trees overwhelmed it there was already a crop of commercial significance taken from the land of College Plantation, namely wild strawberries. It seems that they grew there in vast quantities and so Martin's dad paid schoolchildren to pick them for sale in local markets. Bear in mind, said Martin, that this was before the days of commercial strawberry growing. Wild mushrooms were also gathered in large numbers thanks to all that horse dung I suppose?

Martin now pointed to the view across to Denner Hill on the far horizon. "The stones from there built Windsor Castle" he said, which impressed me. Then he indicated that some of those stones were also incorporated in the Monkton Farm garden walls and paths. I think he said it was a sort of sandstone and unusual for these parts.

Life on the farm was a hard seven day per week slog all the year round just to survive. The soil on these hilltops is poor and not many crops would flourish in the

conditions then prevailing. There was no electricity and no running water. Strange to talk of in today's selfish ethos, but when crops needed bringing in and there was hay to be made, the local villagers would just come along and help out for free (well actually for a good supper and and plenty of beer). There were also some cottages where now stands a property called Monkton, where the tenants stayed almost rent free on the condition that they would also help out on the farm when needed.

Social life in those 1930's was much centered on the various pubs. You might start at the George and end up at, say, the William, from where the pub crawl might end and the not so drunk would lead the very drunk home.

The main village shop was Speen Stores at the top of Chapel Hill. Unlike today you didn't just grab what you wanted, pay for it and rush out all within ten minutes or less. Butter had to be neatly patted into shape, cheese cut off with wire and ham shaved from its joint. Sweets had to be shaken out of jars and things got weighed on ancient scales. But before all that the availability and quality of goods had to be fully discussed with the shopkeeper. At Speen Stores her practice was to list the items and their prices on the top one of a neat pile of brown paper bags on

the counter; some of the items would then go into this bag. Like millions of little boys before and since, Martin would wait fairly patiently as his mother and the shopkeeper discussed all manner of things before completing the transaction - perhaps three quarters of an hour after entering the shop (or maybe it just seemed that long). 1937 brought the realisation that war was inevitable. The government, realising that this island could starve under siege, began to take control of what was being grown on the land - including what was grown at Monkton Farm. The bureaucrats knew nothing of its soil and climate and gave orders for completely inappropriate crops to be grown. As a direct consequence of this interference, the Clarks went bankrupt and commercial farming at Monkton Farm ceased forever.

We moved into the house, a sturdy and largely unaltered brick and flint structure built possibly in the 1830's. But this is no dimly lit cottage, since bright daylight shines in from every point of the compass, so well planned was the size and positioning of the windows. Martin now speaking unstopably explained the original set-up of the kitchen - here had been a carved-out stone sink and there was a hand-pump forcing water from the outside tank which took water from the roof. There up on

the ceiling were the hooks from which hung oil lamps. Terra cotta slabs lined throughout the ground floor, a large walk-in pantry lay behind a big wooden door. Into the sitting room where the original brick and stone fireplace was still in place but now stripped of plaster and repointed. Martin pointed to the spot where his mother would sit for hours in the evening churning milk into butter. We sat and studied the old photographs which Martin had brought, including several of the farmhouse itself. All the time Martin's memories poured forth and I wish I'd taken a recorder. He recalled how in the early summer he would pick the first wild dog roses and take them in to his mum. He still does this every year except of course it is now Martin's wife who benefits from this gesture. Fortified by Yvonne's tea we then braved the continuing drizzle to go out again for a few photographs mainly taken by Martin Hart at the front of the house. As he and I left to go for lunch Yvonne and Martin were still walking round the garden each pointing out this and that - how some things had changed and others not. I have the feeling that Martin will be welcomed to visit again after what had been a special morning in his life.

Peter

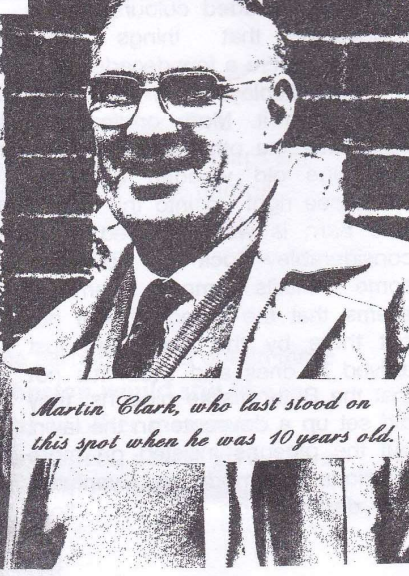
*Past and present inhabitants of Monkton Farm get together
more than half a century on...*



*Yvonne Butt and her family
have lived at Monkton Farm
for the past twenty years....*



Mrs Clark, who accompanied...



*Martin Clark, who last stood on
this spot when he was 10 years old.*

Letters



most careful drivers to see them.

Name and address
supplied.

Dear Editor,

Drivers beware horses

I wonder how many drivers are aware of the rules regarding horses on the road. The Highway Code says: "Drive slowly past the animals. Give them plenty of room and be ready to stop..." The Driving Manual says: "Be careful when approaching horses...Watch the behaviour of horses. The riders might have difficulty controlling them." They would certainly have difficulties given the selfish, inconsiderate behaviour of some drivers. My daughter rides most weekends, and rarely comes home without had at least one driver rush by her.

I don't know whether these people are genuinely ignorant of the law (even though it is purely common sense) and of the nature of horses, or whether they are simply arrogant and bloody-minded. Some of them slow down to 30mph, but that isn't good enough. The fact is, even the most bomb-proof horse can be unpredictable, and should not be expected to be impervious to cars passing at speed.

If a collision were to occur between a horse and a car, then it isn't just the horse and rider who could end up injured or killed: the car would probably be written off and the driver with it.

Maybe if people realised all this they might curb their impatience for a couple of minutes, and everyone would be safer!

Wear Fluorescent Band

Could I suggest that riders wear a fluorescent band when riding in wooded areas, particularly when the weather is overcast. In certain areas of the Hampden woods, for example, the trees form a dense canopy, and the light can be quite poor, even on a sunny day. Often both horse and rider are camouflaged against the road and trees, making it difficult for even the

Dear Editor,

Moving to Speen - better late than never.

We gladly accept the offer to pen a few words for the newsletter to enable us to say a sincere THANK YOU to so many people for their warm and friendly reception from day one (Sept 10th).

We were extremely fortunate to enjoy beautiful weather for our move from Ruislip (our home for 27 years), which gave the perfect start to this completely different way of life.

Total strangers called that first week, bearing cut flowers or potted plants from their gardens, and invitations to meet their friends, which we have since done. To share in a communal village breakfast has given us both a lot of pleasure in our respective turns. One new friend, quite unsolicited, loaned me his garage and his wood-turning lathe for several visits before Christmas, when he heard of my need. (no prizes for guessing here).

It is no bad thing to live on what we are beginning to call "The Studridge Loop", where one can watch the rich tapestry of village life pass by (obviously regarded as a "constitutional" by many). Within a stone's throw are: the village hall, where everything happens, the playing field, the King William (very convenient) and hopefully soon, the village shop (even I could write the ad for this location).

Not least on our list is the friendly sound of horses, clip-clopping almost daily past our door - more so when one rider turns out to be Jackie Edwards (nee Storey), a friend and neighbour from her youth and also from Ruislip - a far cry from Speen.

Bucks wins hands down

Having driven countless miles,

through surrounding counties, the sheer beauty of the rolling hills and wooded slopes of Bucks won hands down, but finding the house was pure happenstance. Our middle daughter, living in Amersham, noticed the ad. in the Bucks Free Press, phoned us immediately, and we charged over to see. To our amazement it matched its description, so we were lucky!

What does strike a newcomer is the pure clean feel to the air. The stars even look closer at night. Also, the convenient relationship between walks and good pubs which exists around Speen; a useful adjunct when entertaining family and other visitors.

We inherited electronic gates with "Strawmoor", (which is always good for a laugh) but in fact, living in a narrow lane they are quite logical and we now find them very useful.

Daphne is being very wifelike and telling me not to go on too long, so I must taper off. We look forward to meeting and getting to know more of you and also seeing if spring and summer can compare with the glorious autumn we have just experienced. If, added to that, we can achieve some regular golf locally, then our cup will be full.

We close with heartfelt thanks to our new friends, whom we find, as the Spanish so aptly put it - "muy simpatico." *Daphne & Fred Westray*

Village shop cheaper overall

It is very good news that someone is at last prepared to ignore the Residents' Association's off-putting insistence that most villagers opposed the revival of a shop-cum-post office in Speen.

I hope the newcomer will make a lasting success of his enterprise.

Walking to the village shop involves no petrol costs, no car park charges and no engines running in traffic queues, so the cost of local purchases may not, by comparison, prove as expensive as anticipated.

Anne Selby

When the Witney family left us for Canada it was 1912, around the time when the Titanic sank. They arrived safely and settled. Before leaving these shores, however, they donated their bit of land at Redlands End for the building of a Mission Hall and Bob Johnston has unearthed some material on the subject. What follows is a contemporary newspaper report concerning the opening of the Mission Hall. (slightly edited down)

SPEEN

Opening of a new Mission Hall - 1912

For many years services have been conducted at Redlands End by the Baptist Church at Speen, who have sent preachers on alternate Sundays to this hamlet, and a useful work has been done by the Church in this direction. The services were begun in a cottage occupied by Mr and Mrs Witney and family. Mr Witney died some years ago, but Mrs Witney continued to receive the preacher and worshippers with a willingness that encouraged them to continue the work Mrs Witney and her family have recently left England for Canada, but before doing so she offered to give a plot of ground for the purpose of erecting a room where services could be held. Her offer was gratefully accepted and now a very suitable little building stands on the ground so generously given. The Speen church have been hard at work raising money for defraying the cost of the room and have been successful in getting together £20 towards £80 which the new building has cost. Mr A. Ward is chairman of the committee and Mr H. Saunders acts as secretary. The new room has been built by Mr W. Harbrow, South Bermondsey Station, S.E. It is of corrugated iron and has seating accommodation for fifty persons (I would just mention at this point that there are still a few corrugated iron remains and bits of a fire place as the only evidence that the Mission Hall existed. Ed.)

The opening ceremony took place on Wednesday afternoon by Mr D. Clarke of High Wycombe who is a staunch supporter of Non-conformity, especially in village causes. The proceedings were opened by singing O, God our help in ages past...

Mr Clarke, in a brief speech, expressed his appreciation of the kindness of the Speen friends in asking him to come and open the new room. He congratulated the church upon their enterprise...The criticism of today that small places were not successful, but when under the wing of the church they ought to succeed...

Divine worship followed in the new room, which was filled to overflowing, many having to remain outside... Mr Ward gave an interesting report from Rev. C. Saville, late Pastor of Speen Church...When looking round where to hold cottage meetings at the end of 1883 or early 1884, I called upon the late Mr Witney, and, if I remember rightly had to pay another visit for an answer, which was if that "poky" room was of any use, he and his wife would be pleased for services to be held...The Rev. W. Coombs of Princes Risborough held a meeting occasionally at Green Haily, but O informed him that the Speen friends had got an opening at Redlands End, he gave up his, thus supplying an object lesson of the wisdom of not overlapping. "I think we used to go once a fortnight to Mr Witney's - Mrs Saville with me, and others as a kind of bodyguard, viz., Bretheren W. Ridgley, F. Cartwright, T Bristow, W. Plumridge, W. Ward etc. On dark nights with a good lantern and stout sticks, we used to trudge along, generally by the road. It was not always light above or dry underfoot. Motors were not in those days. I can well remember that while we had good times at other places, there used to be an unction resting on all at Redland End...I remember asking Mr Witney whether he could give or sell us a piece of land for a hall, as at that time a dear friend of ours...would have built one...free of cost, but not an inch could be procured. More than once I said to our late friend Witney, there would be one erected some day. He used to reply "Possibly", but he would not live to see it, and so it turns out...

Annie Witney and her family - what happened to them and to the Mission Hall

Bob also provided the following information on Annie Witney and her family and also on what happened to the Mission Hall. I apologise for the poor illustrations. They were reproduced from very dark photocopies and I suspect you will now be looking at black blobs! Ed. Bob wishes to thank Mrs Moore of Canada (granddaughter of Annie Witney) for the photos and also Mrs Grace Lawrence (nee Brown) who was organist at the chapel following her mother. Thanks also, says Bob, to Janet Adams for the history of Forestor's Cottage (the former Mission Hall).

Annie Witney was widowed about 1898 and gave birth to her seventh child two months after her husband's death. The family continued farming ducks, sending produce to Aylesbury and London.

In March 1912, three sons were refused the purchase of a large farm in Loudwater "because they were too young" at 24, 18 and 16. The family then decided to emigrate and the farm was sold, for £360, to the Earl of Buckingham (Hampden House) for use by his forrester. Then off they sailed to the prairies of Saskatchewan

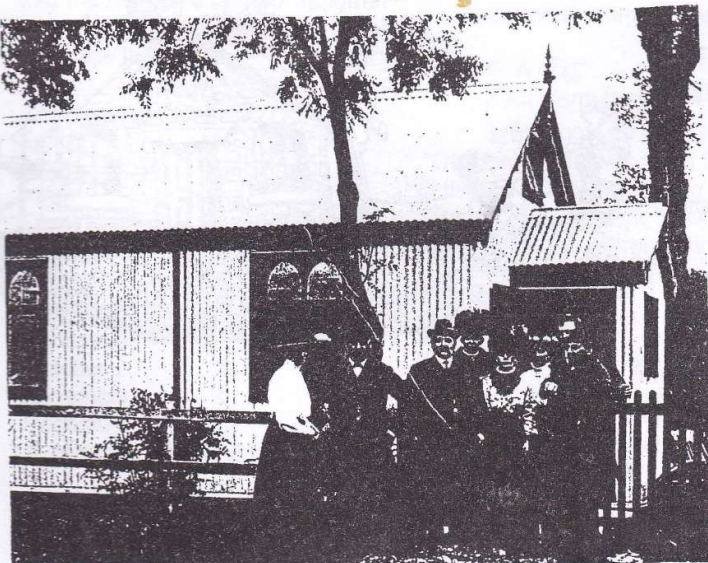
Meanwhile, back at Redland End, the Mission Hall continued its purpose for a time, but then came the 1930s depression, after which the building was converted for use as a residence by the Williams family. Their fireplace and a few pieces of corrugated iron, used in the original construction, are all that now remain on the site to remind us of that little bit of local history. The house was abandoned at some time in the 1960's



To
Mrs. Annie Witney.

We, the Deacons and Members of the Speen Baptist Church do hereby tender to you our profound gratitude for the kindness and consideration you have shown to us in opening your house each alternate Sunday afternoon for the period of thirty five years for the public worship of Almighty God. We also ask your acceptance of our sincere thankfulness for the gift of a plot of freehold land whereon to erect a Mission Hall for the continuance of the same worship and we pray that God's choicest blessing might continually abide upon you and that wherever your lot may be cast you may always remember with joy the happy seasons spent in your house at [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

Signed } William Edwards }
 } Charles Eastbright }
 } Charles Allen }
 } Richard Ward }
 } Harry Saunders }



Speen Baptist Church new Mission Hall at Redlands End - built after the Witney family left for Canada on the land donated by Granny Witney for this purpose.

Speen Planning Applications



97/07344	Magpies, Grubbins Lane	Side Extension
97/07104	Caravan Site	One extra caravan and resiting existing caravans

The following Applications have been approved:-

97/06092	Pye Cottage, Chapel Hill	Extension
97/06597	2 Cottage Farm Way	Garden Shed & alter entrance access
97/06798	Rosebank Cottage, Chapel Hill	New house at side (renewal of existing consent)
97/06611	14 Abbotswood	2 Dormer windows in roof
97/06671	Wayside, Hampden Road	Extension at rear
97/05804	Magpies, Grubbins Lane	Rear extension

The following Application has been refused:-

97/06870	Caravan Site	Clear site and erect five large detached houses
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Buildings in Speen of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

Listed below are the buildings in Speen which have been categorised all as Grade II and registered with the Department of the Environment as Listed Buildings:-

Rosebank Cottage, Chapel Hill

Speen Baptist Chapel

The Old King George, Flowers Bottom Lane

The Old Post Office, Hampden Road

Gable End, Aveluy, Corner Cottage, Hampden

King William IV Public House, Hampden Road

Rose Cottage, Hampden Road

Speen Farmhouse (Home of Rest for Horses)

Barn at Speen Farmhouse

Smaller barn to East of Speen Farmhouse

Elm Tree Cottage, Studridge Lane

Darvills Cottage, Turnip End



Don White

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH IS JUST 6 YEARS OLD

SPEEN Neighbourhood Watch was six years old on the 29th of January this year. For some of us in Speen it may seem that it has been in existence for ever, and for some of us it seems like just a couple of years. Perhaps to some it doesn't exist at all.

I suppose the question that springs somewhat readily to mind is "Does it work?" The problem with simple basic questions is that they seem to demand simple basic answers,

Like "does your dog bite?" and we all know the problem Clouseau got into with the simple basic answer of "No".

I suppose to start to try to somehow answer that question we need to ask a few slightly more sophisticated questions to the people who deal with household crime on a regular basis, and then look at some recent data and statistics. If we agree that that's a good start, then we discover that we are asking the wrong question.

I suppose a better question is "How effective is Neighbourhood Watch?" Not a good question, just better. (Closed questions never get you very far).

Crime Reports

Looking at the Speen crime reports for the last year we see that there was no reported crime for the months of April, May & June and that the highest month for reported crime was December. The year looks like this

<u>Month</u>	<u>Reported crimes</u>
January	1
February	Nil
March	2
April	Nil
May	Nil
June	N/A
July	3
August	3
September	1
October	3
November	3
December	7

A total of 23 reported crimes.

This simple set of statistics begs the question "What sorts of crimes are they?" That I think is a good question and helps us understand the problem. They are as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>No</u>
Burglaries	10
Theft from Garage	5
Theft from car	4
Criminal Damage	2
Stolen Vehicle	1
Damage/Theft from Telephone Box	1

Burglaries Top of List

I suppose it is no surprise that burglaries from private residencies are at the top, in fact if these were removed from the figures it would reduce reported crime by 65%.

I was talking to my man (MK) in the Inns of Court last week about burglaries and domestic crime, (he sees a lot of work relating to criminal damage and private prosecutions as well as police prosecutions). And he offered me these observations over a cup of best Viennese at his local coffee house.

With house burglaries we are not talking organised crime, but basic crime opportunity. Most burglaries are committed in the afternoon. Why? Because at night it's dark and you can't see what your doing. (Surprisingly logical isn't it.) The pro's say that if they want to get in nothing will stop them, they just don't want to get caught. There are three things that the opportunist burglar doesn't like.

1. A dog.
2. An alarm they can't stop.
3. Making a lot of noise.

"Of course" said MK "what is really at the top of the list is being seen"

"In fact" MK went on "most conviction and apprehensions are brought about by neighbours reporting suspicious circumstances". A fact!

Whether we are in a neighbourhood watch scheme or whether we just keep our eyes open and are not afraid to be

inquisitive and question the unusual, it would seem that our efforts have value and gets results. Just what is the ratio of policemen to households for heaven's sake? and how many neighbourhood watchers are there per household? The reality is all too clear!!!!

I thank my neighbour for quizzing a rather bewildered van driver parked in my drive as to what he was doing. "I'm just collecting this old carpet" he said pointing to a large dilapidated roll of carpet I had left out for him. "Well that's alright then," she said "only we've got to be careful haven't we". Good for her I say.

The RingMaster system is soon to be available to all co-ordinators. This is a system which generates information on all relevant crimes and activities in the area from Aylesbury police HQ, and will up-date all co-ordinators by telephone as it happens.

Areas not covered

Jackie Newman our Speen Area Co-ordinator, tells me that the following areas in Speen have no local Co-ordinators :-

Coleheath Bottom
Cottage Farm Way (4 properties)
Flowers Bottom Lane (top end)
Grubbins Lane
Hampden Rd
Highwood Bottom
Moses Platt Lane
St. Peters Close
Lily Bottom Lane
Turnip End.

If anyone would like to volunteer to be a co-ordinator for these areas Jackie would welcome a call from you (and possibly so would your neighbours.) You can reach her on 488474.

I must thank John Radford (who started N.W in Abbotswood in 1992) for furnishing me with a lot of detailed information and for being so helpful.

Martin Hart

*An interesting letter from Roger Ward's Father, written to the BBC (we believe) in 1968.
Forwarded to us by Bob Johnston.*

3 Undercliff gardens
Bassett
SOUTHAMPTON
28 June 1968

Dear Sir,

I know Mr Arthur Negus has a great knowledge of all kinds of furniture and, as I myself, have always been a worker in wood. I much enjoy his descriptions and uses of English woods especially.

He frequently mentions Oak, Beech, Elm, Ash, Chestnut, Walnut, Yew and inlay woods like Holly, Bay etc.. but I have never heard him speak of Sweet Cherry.

I was born and brought up in the Chilterns close to the chair making town of High Wycombe. As far as I know the Windsor Chair originated there. Messrs Glenistère were making them in 1837 or before. Seats were always Elm, legs, stretchers, lists and stands were of Beech.

When I was a lad, 70 years ago, most firms were small family affairs, preferably not more than eight or ten and all craftsmen. It was the custom when a young man got married to make him a seat of kitchen furniture. Four common Windsor's, a grandfather and a mother's chair.

In many cases these were made of cherrywood, finished by being oiled with linseed oil, beeswax and turpentine. Some of this wood can hardly be distinguished from mahogany. The use of cherry may have been purely local as the Chiltern Hills were noted for their great cherry orchards, many, alas, now gone to make way for buildings. I doubt whether you would find complete sets of this furniture now, as when the old folk died, they would be split up between relatives. I know that there are some fine old grandfather chairs about still. Made over 100 years ago they are as solid as the day they were made despite rough usage.

High Wycombe was the main centre of chair making in Bucks. owing to the great stretches of beech woods through that part of the country. In its beginning this was purely a rural craft and the mainstay of the town and villages around. This was the method used. In the autumn, when the leaves were down, the agent and chief woodsman from the big estates Great Hampden, West Wycombe Estate, Bradenham and Hughenden Manors, etc. would tour and mark mature trees, in lots. Nearer Christmas there would be fire lunches and timber sales at the big houses.

Woodturners, who spent their lives in the woods, were invited to bid for lots standing. The woodsman and his team moved in and the trees were felled at the manor's expense. The turners main plant was two 12 x 10 hurdles, thatched with straw, a pole lathe and a shaving block. The trunks were cut in proper sections, split, shaved and turned in the lathe, whose motive power was a green fir pole, a piece of cord and a treadle worked by the foot. In enclose a photograph of old Mr Anderson and his shop where he spent all his working life. A good man turned out a gross of legs in a day, for which the labour pay was 4/6d.

Practically nothing in the wood was wasted, limbs too small or twisted were cut into full blocks, the tops provided bean and pea sticks, the small stuff was made into bundles called kindlers and sold to the bakers and housewives at so much a hundred; even the chips were bagged and sold, only the turnings were burnt in the woods. The finished legs, stretchers etc. were taken into town and sold in the best market, to the small firms, where the "chair bodgers" and farmers did the assembly and furnishing and sold, in turn, chiefly to the London market.

This old woodland craft is now no more, machinery and power have taken over and something of the pride of personal craftsmanship has been lost, alas, for ever

Yours Truly A.J. Ward

VIEWS FROM KNAPDALE

My prayers were answered last April when I first set foot on the foundations of what is now Knapdale, Laurel Close. After four years of scanning the local press, hounding estate agents twice a week and trekking through every possible new abode throughout South Bucks, it was such a relief to find exactly what we were looking for in our most favourite of villages.

The next four and a half months were fraught with disappointments and near disasters during negotiations with vendor, builders, sub-contractors and utility companies.

The move date itself was so "flexible" we were forced to spend a week in hotels with two suitcases and a mobile phone. The rest of our worldly possessions, including pets, plants and P.C.s were bussed or borrowed to kennels, friends, family and neighbours: the furniture and fabric of the home from Hughenden was sent to a container warehouse in Luton.

Anyone would think we were moving to Outer Mongolia. Thames Water proved the most frustrating, throughout their entire organisation there was one single operative who understood our plight and forced repeated emergency chlorination tests until our new supply was connected.

Once in, we battled to get post delivered via Princes Risborough ("sorry mate, never heard of Laurel Close") – Vernon was on leave. The telephone connection involved huge numbers of B.T. staff who scaled poles, dug holes and puzzled over spaghettis of wires but appeared baffled when confronted with new houses on an old site. The interminable "snagging list" of unfinished building works continues to this day. The intrepid Jehovah's Witnesses, however, found us within ten days.

Six months has passed and Laurel Close is fully occupied. All of the above was worth it. What bliss it is to look out onto the horses grazing or galloping in the field, to wave at neighbours walking dogs and to have peace and tranquillity.

For me the icing on the cake is the ability to walk to church. My first encounter, as I gingerly stepped into the Baptist Chapel, was a friendly greeting, then numerous introductions via people I had met walking in the fields. Over the months, my children have joined me on Sundays, getting to know new friends. This month I am enjoying helping with Sunday school, an ever-growing, happy band of boisterous youngsters.

During our nine years in Hughenden we enjoyed many a long walk across the beautiful countryside. Now in Speen, we ensure that we make the time to walk or ride to explore new routes, made even more inviting when a pub beckons in the distance!

The sense of community and neighbourliness is very strong here in Speen. A friend asked me recently how we were settling because, as he put it, "...you never know ...". I responded that even my greatest hopes for new friendship had been fulfilled.

If you are new to the village or maybe unable to meet people due to a variety of reasons, do check the notice-boards for events, or ring one of the group leaders for more information. If I have not already met you, I hope I will soon.

SUZI ROSE

North Dean Reporting...

NORTH DEAN VILLAGE HALL DIARY

Report by Megan Chinn

HALLOWEEN EVENING

Attendance was poor, but those who came said they enjoyed themselves and hoped we would repeat it this year. We had a terrific fire built by Jez and Andy from material gathered from around the village. This is a family event with excellent food and games. Let's hope we get a greater response next time

BEETLE DRIVE

This is becoming a great favourite, with yet another request for more in the future! (I must admit to knowing nothing of this event, and being greatly suprised that the fun and speed required in taking part) A very happy evening.

XMAS SERVICE

For many years a short service has been held in the village hall, conducted by the vicar of Hughenden Church-Present vicar Charles Overton. Amazing what one can do with a white cloth and floral arrangements on one of the hall's tables to transform the hall into a place of worship. Four or five readings were taken from the congregation - a real village feel to the occasion, finishing with coffee and biscuits.

TAPESTRY- MILLENNIUM PROJECT.

We have had our first meeting - more to follow. Please support this grand idea put forward by Dorothy Hazell. Read her article elsewhere in this issue and contact her if you want further information.

CITIZENS LUNCH

The criteria for this lunch is that one must be 60. Definitely not an occasion to be missed if you are eligible. A wonderful meal and entertainment (this year slides of

great interest). I won't say much more as one of our "very contented" guests has written a report elsewhere in this issue.

However if you feel you have been missed and wish your name to be put on our invitation list for next year, contact me or your nearest committee member.

Megan Chinn

P.S.

GREAT NEWS !!! our hall is becoming quite a sought after venue, with many repeat bookings.

Has your committee put on an event for your pleasure?

Please support us. It could be a terrific tragedy if the village were to lose this gem through lack of support.

NATIONAL BLIND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY:

BILL CHINN would like to thank all North Dean Residents who gave so generously to the above charity. Amount collected. 100.17

On Saturday the 24th January about 36 residents of North Dean and there guests attended the "Senior Citizens" lunch in the village hall.

What a lovely afternoon it was, the food cooked and served by members of the Village Hall Committee was, as always, delicious. Roast Chicken, lots of vegetables, and a large selection of desserts, plus wine and coffee were much appreciated with the dinner suggesting that a very good restaurant could be run in the village by the committee.

After the meal Colin Harrison showed a selection of slides he had taken over the year, showing views of our village and it's surroundings during the changing

seasons. We really do live in one of the most beautiful parts of our country, and Colin has a marvellous talent for seeing things and views that most of us probably do not notice in our busy lives. He accompanied the slides with very appropriate music by Edward Rubbra and Elgar. I am sure there are more people who qualify to attend this lunch each year, and I really recommend that they do not wait until they are in there eighties before they consider themselves old enough - (or not too young) - you are missing a good meal, good conversation and good company.

See you next year !!!

Anon.

NORTH DEAN'S MILLENNIUM TAPESTRY PROJECT

The idea of a tapestry depicting North Dean past and present has been enthusiastically received. Our first meeting took place on 9th of February at Megan's, eleven of us- and our lovely tea boy Bill - had a lively discussion with lot's of ideas for the design and content. We hope more of you will be interested in helping, if you don't sew, how about sponsoring a square of stitching, or just making a donation, we have to find funding for this project, so all would be welcome..

Our next meeting - 4th March. 8pm at Megan's. I can be contacted on 563534, or contact any Village Hall committee member.

Dorothy Hazell

MORE WANTED

We've had some great stuff from North Dean, but not enough. Come on - everyone has at least one article in them. How about some holiday disaster stories for example?

Eric Hancox

(Eric Hancox of Coleheath Bottom died recently. Three hundred or more people crammed into St. Francis Church, Terriers, for his funeral and even the aisles were full of people standing. That so many wished to bid farewell to Eric reflected not just a life full of varied interests, but also the great affection he inspired from those who knew him. Those who knew him best called him "Taffy". This was always an ironic joke to him, because although his accent betrayed a Welsh upbringing, he was, he told me, actually of English parentage. I just knew Eric from stopping occasionally for a chat whilst I was walking my dogs up the lane. But I got to know him well enough to joke with him about his obsessive interest in collecting objects, mainly engineering items, from all over and progressively parking them in his garden. So whenever he wanted to plant some more flowers and bulbs he tended to find space for them first in the verge outside and then in the wood beyond the bridlepath, so that now there are patches of daffodils extending about twenty yards into the trees for the delight of passers by. He loved living next to that wood. Ed.)

Dear Peter,

Please find enclosed letter to the village.

Dear Friends,

David, Lucy and I would like to thank everyone for their cards and letters of sympathy, and for attending the services at Francis church and Amersham Crematorium, and for joining us afterwards at Wycombe Rugby Club to celebrate Eric's life.

Eric touched so many peoples lives, which was borne out by the huge number of people at the services. The village has been our home since our marriage 28 years ago and it was comforting to know so many of you attended, even though some of you had to queue to get in and were faced with standing room only.

To try and explain the devastation we feel is impossible, our lives are shattered and will never be the same again. We grieve also for what Eric will miss and it is so hard to believe he is no longer with us physically.

I am grateful for the support offered and opportunity to talk about Eric and to share our wonderful memories of a very precious man

Love,

Margaret Hancox

BACK TO EARTH WITH A BUMP

We were beginning to think that we were entering a new era of colour starting with Issue 12, even if most pages were still being produced on a scratchy school copier (We love you PR School and we wouldn't exist without your affordable copying). However, Stuart, our provider of colour, tells me that it cost about five million pounds and there's this expensive dude ranch he needs to spend his money on instead. However, many thanks, Stuart, for our one moment of glorious technicolour (as they used to call it in stoneage cinema).

Pete the Ed.

LADIES BREAKFAST

First contribution from our new cub reporter, Mary Dawson

Mary Kissell, wife of a Church Leader, gave a very interesting talk at the Ladies Breakfast held in Speen Village Hall on Saturday 24th January.

Mary told us how she had decided to retire from nursing, so that she would have more time to accompany her husband on his travels (Wise lady I'm sure, sorry, Ed.) relating to his work, and also to pursue some of her other interests. How wrong she was!

Out of the blue, her husband received a telephone call asking him to go to a house where a man had just murdered his wife. There were four children involved, ages ranging from 10 to twenty years. He had only just met one of the children before, at the youth club, but he agreed to go. He brought them home that night as the house was being sealed by the police. And eighteen months later they are still looking after them! The couple's own children had already left home, so it was a bit like starting again!

Then her husband, who comes from New Zealand, had a chance to return there on holiday to visit his elderly mother. They had to arrange for a couple to look after the children while they were away.

While in New Zealand, Mary's husband had a surfing accident, in which he broke his neck. Luckily, with her nursing training, Mary realised the importance of keeping his neck perfectly still. Various people came rallied round to help and her husband was taken to hospital. He was there for three months before coming home and subsequently making a complete recovery. The lesson is, says Mary, not to make too many plans as you just don't know what is round the corner!

A vote of thanks was given by Caroline Gower and we were served a delicious breakfast cooked by some of the husbands.

It's more



Dear Editor,

Increased traffic danger

With the imminent arrival of our eagerly awaited village shop, as a regular village pedestrian, I can't but help anticipate with dread my eight-year-old's words - "Mummy please can I go to the shop to buy some sweets?" My answer would certainly have to be "No - not on your own." But the pressure is certainly going to be on - and when will I feel I can say "Yes."

This week I have spoken to three members of the County Highways

Department at Wycombe to establish if there are any plans pending to make a provision for the increased pedestrian and motor traffic around the Chapel Hill/Hampden Road junction. **There are none!**

When I enquire how I approach the issue with regard to traffic calming measures, I was abruptly advised that there was no one for such projects. There is no record of accidents at the junction, so it would figure as an extremely low priority. Dawes Hill in Wycombe is still awaiting traffic calming measures after nineteen accidents there!

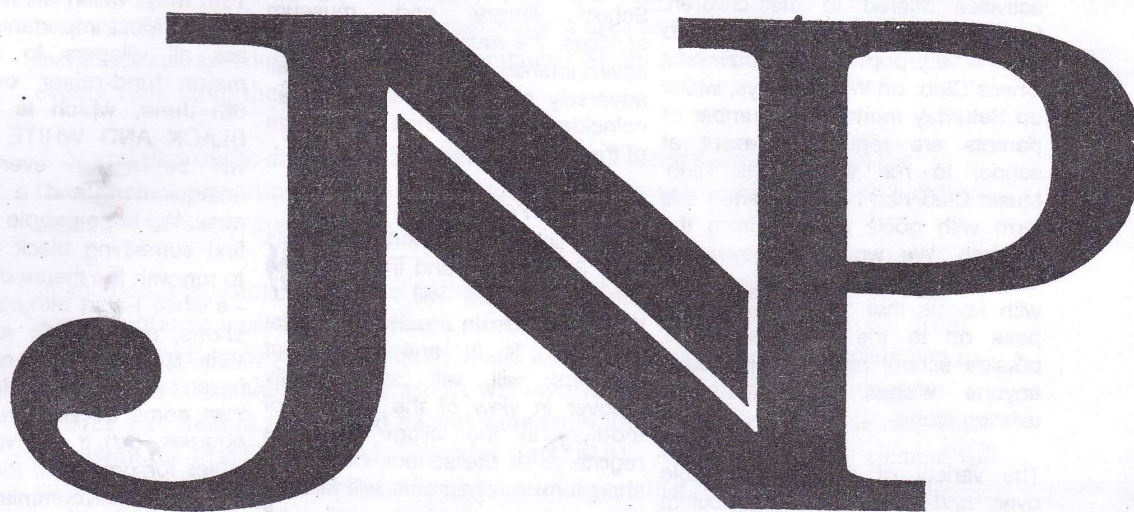
The number of children in Speen seems to be rising (is there something in the water?) and I do not believe we should await an accident involving one of our children before measures are taken to increase awareness substantially and to slow the traffic down.

Suggestions

We need warning signs, rumble strips, and what about right-angling the corners of the Hampden Road where it meets Chapel Hill?

Cherry Peckins

JENKINS NEWMAN Partnership



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"Great support from villagers, notably the WI"

reports Peter Symonds

Many thanks to all members of the village community who supported the Seventies Night at the end of last year. The event comprised comedy sketches from 1970's classics like Monty Python and Faulty Towers; a quiz and singalong session, together with a fish and chip supper. The event was enjoyed by various different groups present and produced a useful profit.

This year the PTA has been able to increase the variety of school activities offered to the children. Geoff Pinder is kindly continuing to run the very popular and successful Chess Club, on Wednesdays, whilst on Saturday mornings a number of parents are regularly present at school to run the Sports Club. Music Club has been restarted this term with good support from the children. We would, however, be pleased to hear from any villagers with talents that they may wish to pass on to the next generation, outside school hours, or indeed if anyone wishes to assist with existing clubs.

The variety of activities available over and above the curriculum helps to ensure that Speen school is sought after by parents.

The school has been very well supported in recent months by many villagers, notably from WI, who have been into school to assist the children with their reading. We

are most grateful for their continued support.

Cuts

However, the pressure on the school and therefore the PTA, from cuts being made by the County Council, continues to build up. The 1998/99 proposals represent a severe cut which will affect the quality and breadth of education for all children. Small schools will be particularly vulnerable to costs arising from long term sick leave. School library and museum services, the music service and the environmental study centre are all adversely affected. These changes coincide with a change in the age of transfer.

Loss of Year 3

Speen school will shortly lose its Year 3 for good, and inevitably the school numbers will, initially, fall dramatically from around 50 to just over 30. It is anticipated that numbers will subsequently recover in view of the number of toddlers in the village who are registered at the school, but in the short term the numbers will fall and the school budget will be significantly reduced as a consequence.

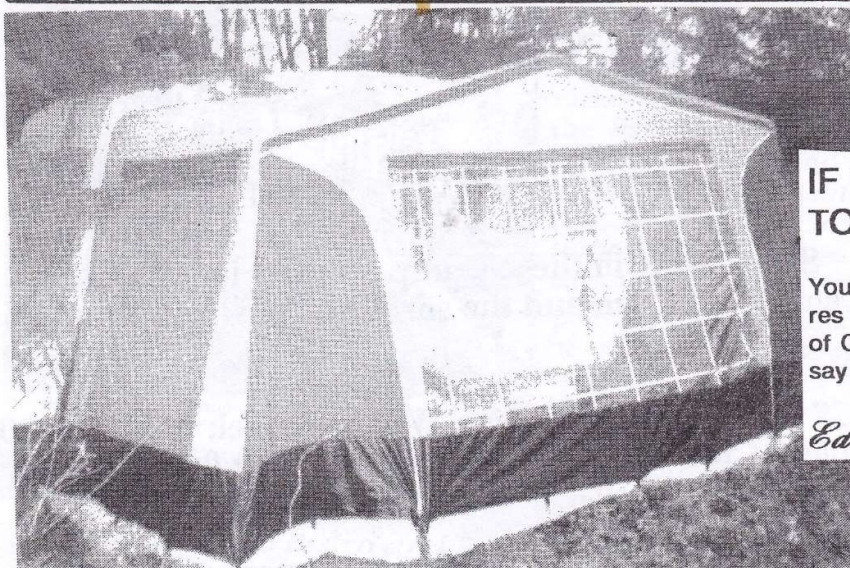
Re-think on PTA funding

In the circumstances, the PTA are

keen to boost their funds to ensure that they can continue to help the school through a difficult period. In recent times, PTA funds have been used for purchasing many basic essentials, such as books, to ensure that school funds can be used for a high level of teacher support.

Fund-raising events are planned for the summer term. We intend holding a **Car Wash event, for example, at school on Saturday 16th May**, which will be open to all drivers. Most importantly, we would ask all villagers to support our **major fund-raiser on Saturday 6th June, which is the SPEEN BLACK AND WHITE BALL**. This will be a fun event with live entertainment and a three-course meal. We hope people will try to find something black and/or white to run with the theme of the evening - a white T-shirt with black bermuda shorts, maybe?! Or a black tie if that is your preference. If you haven't got anything black or white, then come as you are! (*the mind boggles, Ed*) If you want to book tables for groups of friends, please let me or other committee members know. **Why not approach your friends now?**

peter symonds
on 488016



IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS...

You'll find Speen's ultimate des res abode nestling in the middle of College Wood. What is it they say - "Sought after location?"

Ed.

Speen 2000

On a chilly Monday night in January a couple of dozen residents of Speen met in the village hall to discuss outline proposals for a Speen Millennium Celebration. The consensus was very much in favour, provided that enough residents of Speen are prepared to lend support.

The event, which would take place next summer (1999) and probably be linked in with the annual fete on July 10th, would be based around a history of Speen drawn from records related to the village and the surrounding area as well as from the personal memories and anecdotes of those who remember Speen as it was, the people and the events, right up to the present time.

A central part of the day will be an open air dramatic presentation of village life through the ages, properly scripted to unfold a scene by scene story and with a musical element where appropriate.

In addition, the historical material gathered will be organised into a printed booklet as commemorative record for the village. If funds allow it will also be put on CD-Rom. The first step is to produce the material, and a small working party has already met to discuss how to go about it. One aspect will involve delving into the libraries and records and **help in this would be welcome from any volunteers. Please ring Bob Johnston on 488583 or Martin Stockley on 488101.** Another important element will be to pull together the stories and knowledge of Speen that many local people undoubtedly have.....

UNLUCKY THIRTEENTH ISSUE!

It had to happen some time

Alison, the Princes Risborough Upper School technician, left for pastures new (a bigger salary in Aylesbury) and there was a considerable gap before her replacement took over and could get round to our stuff. Thanks to Jean Morris for helping us negotiate a place in the queue for the school copier machine.

You won't fail to notice that we are bereft of any reports on any out-of-school organised youth activity. That's precisely because we don't know of any at the moment. I'm sure it's just a phase. It's a shame, also, that Speen School is losing a whole year's worth of pupils with the county's reversion from 12+ to 11+.

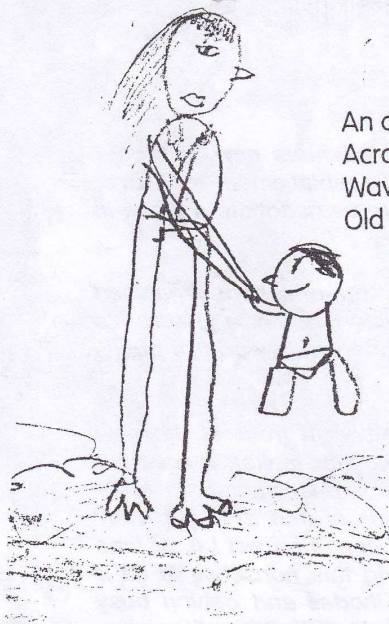
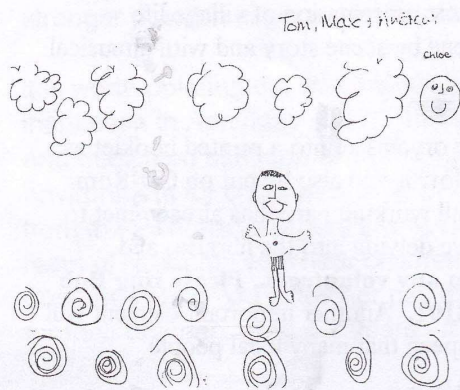
I have to dispel all those ugly rumours about "searching for bodies in front of the new shop". It isn't true, neither have they been drilling for oil (or old five star tanks). It seems it was all about sloping the forecourt blocks so that wheelchairs and pushchairs can enter the shop without help from a crane. Now why didn't someone think of that to begin with? Sadly the editor could not be at the grand opening as he was (or hopes he will be, at time of typing) in California and heading for Oregon. If you are reading this nonsense at all it will be due to Martin Hart getting safely back from his orgy in Rhodes and getting busy with the stapler. (Nice to contemplate someone else doing it for a change - the editor loves it really) Anyway if you did - thanks, Martin and anyone you conned into helping out.

Peter

On the sea is a ship being
pushed along nearer and nearer
to the rocks,
It will crash in to the rocks,
It will crash and go down,
down, down.

William

Boys playing, Water splashing Wet skin, Shiver, shiver.



An old man standing still by some seaweed
Across the salty water there stands a ferry boat
Waves swaying from side to side
Old man standing still.

Toby & Oliver

Dolphins swimming,
Seagulls squawking,
Crabs nipping.

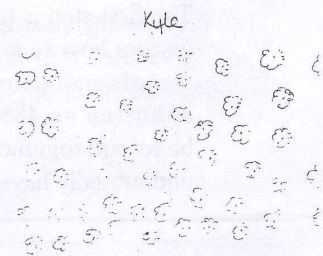
Hannah & Charlotte

Yellow sand, blue sea,
Sand is yucky,
Castle is rough.
Silver handles cover the rocks,
Boy and girl playing on the rocks
and sand.

James & Damien

On a ship at sea there was a soldier
standing still,
With a silver sword and a gold
handle.
Fire fire rang the bells,
We ran but the soldier stands still.
Crash crash goes the waves,
The ship sinks down down down.

Blue water,
Jump splash,
Taste bubbles,
Wet colour.



Speen First School

20th February 1998

Dear Mr. Dawson,

I meant to give you some information to go with the children's poems last week, I hope it's not too late.

The Y2/Y3 class went to Hyllebury museum where they saw an exhibition of photographs based on the places mentioned in the Shipping Forecast. They used the photographs to inspire their poetry and pictures.

Yours sincerely,
Angela Elkin (Class teacher)

Mum holding little boys hand,
People swimming in the water,
Jump, splash,
Soft sand,
Wet and soggy.

Tehreen & Bianca

Sky blue yellow sun,
Ripply water people having fun,
The loud sea the salty water,
The boy having fun fun fun.

Claire & Chloe



Water blue
Push goggles
Active jump
Wet splash
Colour bubbles
Wet push



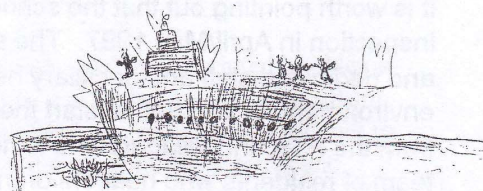
Rachel & Jennifer

**DEAD MAN IN A BOX,
IT IS WET,
VERY COLD.
UMBRELLAS SHELTER
DARK NIGHT.
COLD, SHIVERY, WET.**

Chelsey & Tanya

Don't go past the red and white lines,
It's dangerous, dangerous, dangerous,
Don't go past the red and white lines,
Hurt, suffocate, hospital,
So be careful, careful, careful.

Richard, Michael & Daniel



Irish Sea

Cold and miserable
Waves go whoosh
Smell of the sea
Damp gritty sand
Two people walk on the hard
concrete
Colours are blue, white, gold and
brown.

Alicia

All cold on a dark dark night
Rain rain all cold shivery.

Chelsey & Tanya

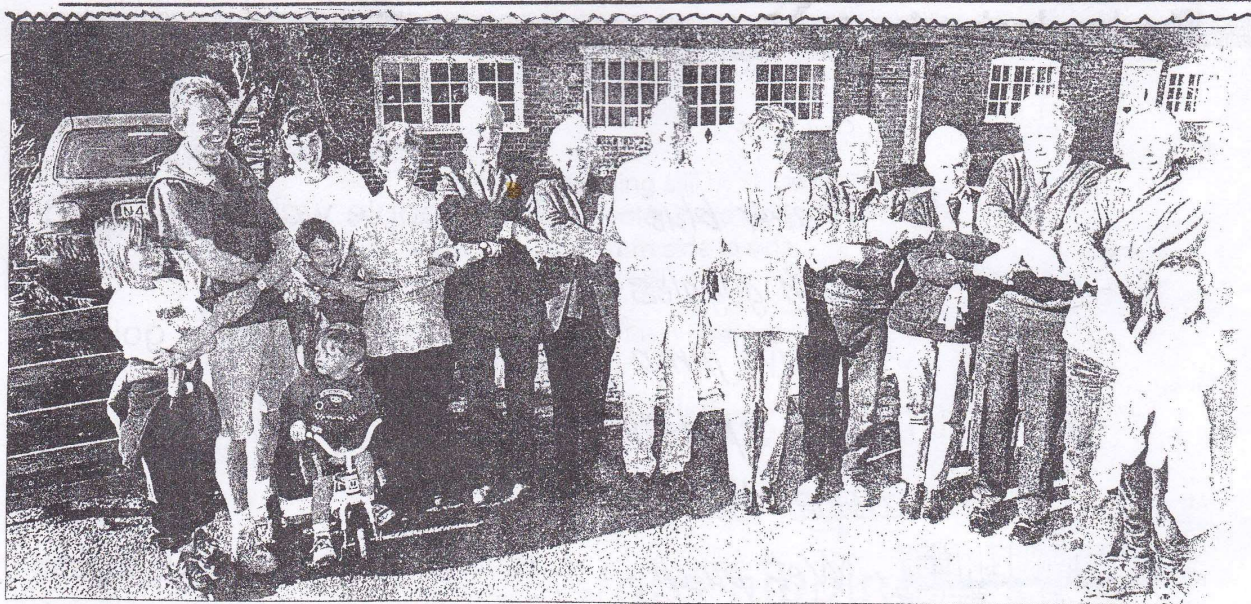
SPEEN SCHOOL

The future of small schools has come under increasing scrutiny in recent months, and some anxiety has been expressed about the future of Speen School. Some of this concern was prompted by an article in the Bucks Free Press last autumn highlighting a "review" of small schools. This review, by the Audit Commission, was originally announced in early 1997 - it took the BFP about six months to catch up with this news.

In the last issue of SNDN Peter Symonds (Chairman of Speen PTA) highlighted the fact that as a Church of England school it is not up to the local education authority to decide its fate. No doubt they would love to get their hands on the Speen School site and sell it for a small fortune for development - but it's not theirs to sell! Nor does the land belong to the Church. It was given in perpetuity for a school by the trustees of Lady Bateman's estate; should there cease to be a school on the site the land reverts to the Bateman Trust not to the Church - so neither Church nor County Council is sitting on a valuable development site. This does mean that the school is in a stronger position to secure its future than some small schools.

It is worth pointing out that the school had an excellent OFSTED report after the inspection in April/May 1997. The school offers small classes, vastly experienced and dedicated staff and ancillary helpers, and a happy, secure and beautiful environment for children to start their education. It has long enjoyed excellent support from the PTA and villagers and is now benefitting from the regular help given by a team of residents who hear children read. I hope parents will remember that they don't need to travel miles nor pay expensive school fees to obtain quality in education for their children aged 4-7 years - it's here on your doorstep!

Jackie Edwards - Chairman of Governors



Village ready to enter the next Millennium - in July

SPEEN villagers plan to steal a march on the rest of the globe by holding their millennium celebrations in July 1999.

Don White, the chairman of Lacey Green Parish Council, said: "We prefer holding a celebration in

the summer when the sun shines rather than on a cold December 31 evening."

An historical village life pageant, inspired by Flora Thompson's Lark Rise to Candleford, will take place on Speen playing fields on

July 10 next year. The event will combine a local history study, including a CD-ROM, with a theatrical and musical production.

Celebrations could also involve a band from Speen's twin town of Hamby, France.

Event coordinator Marjorie Stockley said: "We're hoping to attract people born in Speen to come back and tell us of their experience of growing up here in years gone by."

A living history meeting is

planned for Saturday March 20th 2pm in Speen Village Hall.

Any former Speen residents would like to share their experiences of village life should contact Marjorie Stockley on 01494 488101.

ART AND ABUSE

Are the works of a sinner tainted by his sin?

Eric Gill was a visionary and innovative artist, whose sculptures and bas-reliefs broke new ground in their economy and simple, sweeping lines. A designer whose talents are forever linked with his uncluttered typeface, his most famous commission was the series of tableaux that now hang in Westminster Cathedral to mark the stations of the Cross. An inspiration to the devout and a testament to his own spirituality, these sculptures are now a cause of anguish for Catholics. For it has recently emerged that their creator's life was stained by a sin that our generation finds peculiarly difficult to forgive. Are the works of a sinner tainted by his sin? And if so, do the tableaux have a place in the House of God?

Years after his death in 1940, biographers have revealed what was once known only to his close associates: Gill was a man of voracious sexual appetite, whose partners included not only his sisters but even his teenage daughters. A radical who spurned convention, he justified his behaviour by

propounding a new, liberated order that would transcend traditional rules.

Artists have often escaped public censure on the ground that they live by different mores. But incest and paedophilia break society's strictest taboos. How, it is now asked, can objects intended to inspire veneration and spirituality be dissociated from revulsion at Gill's lifestyle?

At other periods such conflicts would have been much reduced. Athenian democrats and Renaissance princes employed sculptors as they did carpenters or masons. The artist was prized, well paid and even traded between states. If he were a pushy individualist in ancient Greece or a devil-worshiper in the Celestial City he might have problems. But if his personal behaviour failed the local morality tests he would not.

Today, however, we live under the shadow of the Romantic movement: art is the manifestation of the artist's mind; paintings and music are windows on the soul. Add to that a culture in which the daily private lives

of artists are much less private and the concerns of the Catholic protesters are understandable enough.

Many great artists in history would suffer the censure of modern moralists. From Caravaggio to Michelangelo, Dali to Benjamin Britten, the men who produced profoundly spiritual works have led lifestyles long considered sinful by the Church. Should all works of the promiscuous, the cruel, the intolerant and the deviant be removed from public view?

Gill's critics argue that he is particularly troubling because of his place not in a museum but in the premier Catholic cathedral of Britain. Maybe. Much more troubling is the evidence that too many of those who serve the Church today, priests and laymen, have been accused of sexual abuse against children or have tolerated this evil around them. Rather than campaigning to remove works of art that in themselves are inspiring, protesters would better direct themselves against abuse by the living.



"I KNOW YOU"...

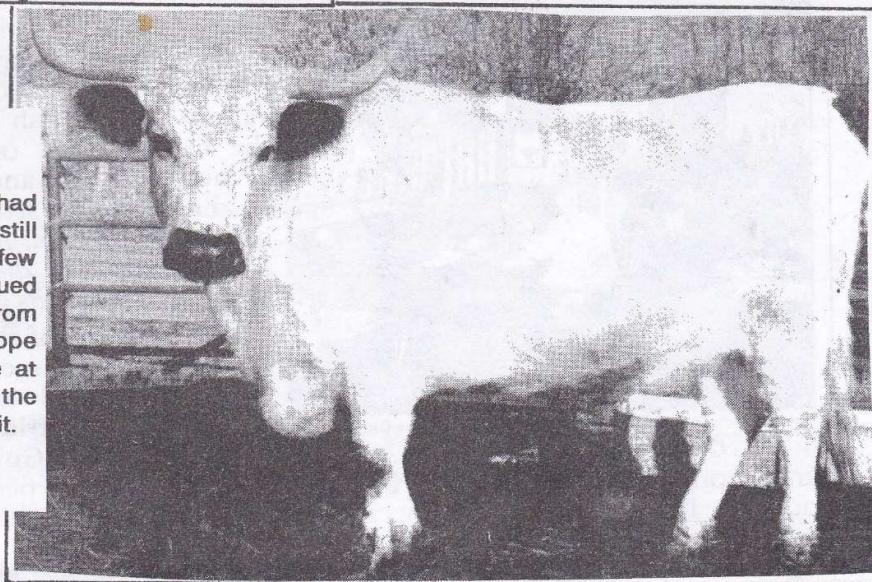
...said the precocious young lady at Speen Pre School, and Father Christmas thought the game was up - until it became clear that she had already met the bearded sledgonaut at some town mall grotto the previous day.

JB

WHERE NOW?

Despite everything that had happened to her she was still looking okay seen here a few days before the RSPCA rescued this lovely White Park cow from her grassless meadow. I hope she has found a good home at last. As we know, her friend the other White Park didn't make it.

Ed.





The Old Plow Bistro and Restaurant at Speen



The Old Plow bistro and restaurant was originally a country Inn built in the 17th century. Hidden away in the peaceful hamlet of Flowers Bottom, Ye Plow Inn as it was called then, was known to just the locals and country lovers who ventured off the beaten track.

Amongst the many famous visitors to Ye Plow Inn, was King Charles II, who kept a hunting lodge locally and stabled his horses at nearby Speen Farm (now the Home of Rest for Retired Horses). It was said that the King's men cooked their food on the big open fires in the bar.

In more recent times, The Old Plow became famous throughout the whole country, when it was taken over by Miss Ishbel MacDonald, the daughter of Ramsay MacDonald, the first Labour Prime Minister. The Old Plow soon became the place to visit and some of its customers still recall the big coal fires and the smells from the kitchen.

These days, our modern amenities blend well with the old world charm of the building and the log fires and oak beams mingle well with the aroma of hot mulled wine and very fine cuisine prepared by its owner of 10 years, Malcolm Cowan. Malcolm, Olivia and their family came to the Old Plow from London where he had been executive chef of Maxims de Paris, London. Previous jobs included head chef of the Westbury Hotel in the West End and also sous chef of The Ritz Hotel, Piccadilly. French trained, his style of cuisine is modern with a strong emphasis on classic sauces.



Malcolm Cowan (Chef patron) in the Restaurant at the Old Plow

Both the a la carte menu in the Bistro and the set price menu in the Restaurant offer a wide and varied selection of dishes but his speciality is preparing delicious fish dishes from the variety of fresh fish and shellfish bought from the fishing boats on Brixham Quay, Devon. Some of the fish and shellfish available at the moment include *scallops, lobster, red mullet, sole, black bream, John Dory, squid, mussels, turbot, seabass and crab*. (All subject to weather conditions and availability).

The reputation of the Old Plow continues to be enhanced as time goes by and Malcolm and Olivia are proud to have contributed to its history. With entries in the Michelin Guide, the Good Food Guide, the Ackerman Guide

and Egon Ronay, they both see a future where many more people will beat a track to its door, be it on foot as well as by car (or even by balloon!).

The Old Plow Bistro and Restaurant, Flowers Bottom, Speen, Bucks
Reservations can be made for the Bistro and Restaurant on 01494 488300.

RUMER GODDEN - Lived Here

I have to thank Jenny for a casual remark which started me on a trail to find out more about Rumer Godden and her connection with Speen.

I watched a dramatisation of her first book of autobiography {because it was about Kashmir} so I knew a little about this unusual author.

Speen is contained within her second volume. "A House with Four Rooms". She tells us that an Indian proverb says.

"Everyone is a house with four rooms. A physical, a mental, an emotional and a spiritual. Most of us tend live in one room most of the time, but unless we go into every room, every day, even if only to keep it aired, we are not a complete person."

After nearly being killed in India Rumer Godden returned to England with her two children in 1945. She was 38 and the children were Jane 9 and Paula 6. She had made up her mind to divorce her husband and earn her living writing.

She lived with her parents on her return to England and then in a small house in London, where she was very ill. She then moved to Sussex and lived in a house that literally fell down. She had friends who lived in Bucks who suggested that St. Peter's Hill in Speen might be suitable. It was the first house she bought. A Mrs. Vivyan lived in the house with her daughter, who died of leukaemia. Mrs Vivyan could not bear to stay in the house so she offered it to Rumer Godden who had to admit that she could not afford the £3000 in order to buy it. So Mrs Vivyan suggested she pay her £1000 a year and to buy the house in that way. What amazing kindness!

The house was attached to the village bakery, which used a wood fired oven. This was owned by Mr

and Mrs Martin who not only cooked bread and cakes but the Sunday joints for the village as well.

Rumer Godden employed a daily maid called Freda who lived with her mother Mrs. Bowler. Freda also made lace.

Rumer Godden also had a secretary at this time called "Bee" who lived in the biggest house in Speen.

There is a photograph in the book of St. Peter's Hill, it does not look very different to what it does now. When I first moved here it had a very distinctive shell porch which was an attraction for people to come to view it. I was told this porch was very old but it does not appear in the photograph and so could not have been on this house very long.

When Rumer Godden moved into the house she said it felt "Beneficent" and she received her decree absolute while living here. She calls Speen as a "caste bound society" as they could condemn new comers as "milk firsters" [a terrible sin] as this made you middle class!!

When she moved to Speen one of her novels had already been made into a film "The Black Narcissus" which she did not approve of. Because of this she was wary of having another film made of her books.

She entertained Jean Renoir at St Peters Hill as he wanted to make a film of her book called "The River". When he arrived all the chairs, sofa and indeed early the cottage were too small for him, so he ended up talking and laying on the floor.

The result of a chance remark by Rumer Godden to her agent, that she didn't want Victor Gollanz to publish her books because she didn't like their garish yellow and

black jackets resulted in a very heavy parcel being delivered at

St. Peter's Hill. The postmaster was at the time 92 years old and the Post Office was run by his 3 daughters. To keep the title of post master he had to take an active part, so he delivered letters and parcels to nearby houses. He carried them in a basket. He would take the post in [not always the correct post] and he would leave his basket in the middle of the road.

"So t'cars know where I be and won't run over I."

He delivered this heavy parcel to Rumer Godden. As she took it from him "Why didn't your daughters phone I would have come to fetch this." she said. "They said I mun do it," and "Books from Lunnon like."

It was books, dozens of them. Another dozen came the next day, and the day after that and the next two days. With the last parcel she had to pick up the basket and help the old man home. None of the books were yellow and black and all were from Gollanz.

When she married her agent James. They drove to the small private church of Little Hampden Park where the vicar blessed them. Then they went to St. Peter's Hill.

Rumer Godden has written many books some for children and is still alive at the age of 90.

GlennHart.

What's in store for Speen

The village shop may already be in operation by the time you read this...

...But that won't stop us reporting what seems to be planned around now, which is mid March. According to my informants the new Speen Stores will be open for business around mid April. It will, they say, be a General Stores, Post Office (subject to authorisation) and Delicatessen, also selling newspapers and wine (subject to licence).

I understand that a three year lease (extendable to six years) is being entered into by someone who has local family connections. The room upstairs is being sub-let to two North Dean ladies who will run a hairdressers.

Any surplus from the rent of Speen Stores will go to needy causes within the village, and a committee will be formed to decide how such money will be distributed. The committee will be made up as follows:

Two Bucks Housing representatives

One Speen Parish Councillor

One person from Speen Fete Committee (since this committee is comprised of representatives from most of the village organisations.) This is what I've been told, although the fete committee hasn't yet been approached about it.

Finally, there will be a "neutral" local chairman chosen to cast any deciding vote required. This committee, it is suggested, will meet every three months.

I understand that there will be an opening ceremony and a shop sign has been designed by children from the school (can't wait to see it).

Ed.

Where it all happens - Speen W.I.

It seems a long time since October when I wrote my last piece.

In November, as well as having our Annual Meeting some of us enjoyed a visit to the Swan to see Blood Brothers.

As our speaker for December was unable to come along, Pat Trunkfield and Pam Messenger came instead to demonstrate some wonderful part dried and part fresh flower arrangements suitable for Christmas, which were then raffled. We also did our usual carol singing round part of the village and made £110 for a Multiple Sclerosis charity.

In January we didn't have a speaker, just a Members' Evening, which was very enjoyable, mainly due to Corrine Symonds who had arranged a super quiz - which the table comprised of Leo Cotterell, Mary Dawson, Gloria Holmes and myself managed to win.

In February, Martin McElhatton talked about and showed slides on Wheelchair Sport.

Future events:

5th March - The Art of Decorating Eggs Faberge-style, by Mrs Cotterill.

2nd April - Our Birthday Party.

7th May - Resolutions.

Don't forget - we would love to see any new members at our meetings, held on the first Thursday of each month.

Barbara Collett

Anyone for tennis?

31.

1997 was a fantastic summer for tennis and there were many Speenies to be seen in possession of a racket enjoying the delights of a spot of tennis!

A huge amount of inspiration came from the coaching given by Sandra and James Heffron. Short Tennis coaching for the under eights, held in the village hall, ran throughout the last winter, followed by Easter holiday and summer term coaching. (To be repeated - see details in this issue).

During the Easter holidays, the Short Tennis groups moved outside onto the court and became, in effect, "transition" tennis (a harder ball than for short tennis, but not the weight of the normal tennis ball). Coaching for the under fourteens started with James Heffron.

The Ladies and Men have benefitted enormously from the Thursday and Saturday morning coaching, respectively, and the standard has improved beyond recognition! Courses ran again last Autumn Term and will recommence

during the 1998 Easter holidays.

All the hard work and enthusiasm culminated in a village tennis tournament held alongside the Village Fun Day in June. Due to the large number of entries and the one tennis court, the competition started on the Friday evening, followed by play from 8am to 9pm on the Saturday and the same on the Sunday, with the finals being played Sunday evening. *Many thanks to all those who took part, - everyone who played contributed to and enjoyed the great atmosphere of the weekend.*

Following the tournament there was considerable support for running a tennis ladder, and *John Oliver* kindly put the wheels in motion. The summer holidays were here before we could take another breath and, unfortunately, momentum has waned a little. However a new much larger notice board is to be sited by the tennis court and information about the ladder, future tournaments and coaching will be posted there.

One of the issues raised this summer concerned the limited number of booking times available to Juniors whose own playing time is restricted by long school hours and homework pressures. Amendments were made to the hours bookable by adults only during the weekday evenings and at weekends, to accomodate the Juniors.

If there is anyone out there who has never played tennis and who would like to start, or maybe you are just a bit "rusty", please let me know. We would also like to start a new Short Tennis group for the Over fours. We try to organise coaching around demand, - please let us know if your or a member of your family would like to play.

Contact Cherry Seekins on 488355.

It's the end of the road for SPEEN THEATRE AND OUTINGS CLUB

This sad letter was received from Sheila and Jo -

Dear Members,

We sadly have to tell you that we no longer feel that the club is viable. The number of members who paid subs this year was very low. We had organised two outings, one of which was cancelled and the other went ahead at financial loss, due to lack of interest. We therefore feel that it is time to give the club a rest.

Should there be sufficient in the future, we would be prepared to consider starting again, but for the time being we'll take our outings individually.

Those who paid five pounds this year may recall that we intended to use this money to benefit the disabled children we both work with. However, if you feel that you would like your five pounds returned, as the club is winding up, please let me know.

Meanwhile, we thank you for your support and giving us the chance to meet new friends and to visit interesting places. So with our belated wishes for a happy 1998,
Yours sincerely

Sheila Tidball and Jo Heattich

News from Speen Baptist Church

Andy writes:

Well done to all the 220+ who packed into the church for the Carols by Candlelight service and gave so generously - we were able to send over £200 for the work of the Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Unit at Halton.



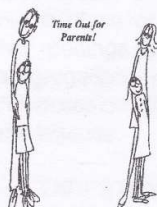
It has been a very busy autumn and New Year in the life of your village church. Particularly encouraging has been the growing friendship between the Christian congregations and leaders in the Parish. Richard Caink, Nick Young, and I meet together regularly to forge friendship, share concerns, pray and plan how the Christian family in the community can work together. Out of this have come the joint services and Lenten courses and our joint Good Friday walk of witness with services of meditation at each church.

The year began with two more baptisms - I've been privileged to baptise four people since arriving 18 months ago. Within the Baptist tradition there is a service of thanksgiving and dedication for a new baby but baptism is reserved for those who have made a personal decision that they want to live their lives as Christians.



True to the name, the traditional Baptist method of baptism is to be fully immersed in water. Part of the symbolism here is of dying to one's old way of life and rising again to a new way of living following Christ's teaching and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

If you've never seen this before, please take this as a personal invitation from me to attend our Easter Sunday celebration when two more believers will be baptised. It is a wonderful time of celebration. (We will be sharing a pot luck Easter lunch together too!!)



Parenting Course - well received by parents and Course founders alike. We think there are still some areas for improvement in the course and hope to have these in place for the next course after Easter, when we also plan to include the module on parenting teenagers. Look out for details.

Home Bible study groups probably sounds the most boring thing in the world to some, but as we have met to investigate God's word and share our thoughts we have been amazed how incredibly relevant to modern living this book is. When many are searching in all sorts of places for answers, we often fail to stumble across them right under our noses. You don't need any special skill or knowledge just a willingness to ask questions.



Weekly Church Activities

Sundays:

10:30 am Worship for all ages including Sunday School.
6:00pm Music Group.
6:30-7:00pm Prayer Workshop (fortnightly).

Tuesdays:

8:00-9:30pm Home Bible Study Group.

Wednesdays:

10:00-11:30am Alpha Course.

Thursdays:

10:00-11:30am Home Bible Study Group.

Fridays:

7:00-9:00pm 'Meet With God' - exploring Christianity through activities and the Bible, open to all curious 12-16 year olds

**"Use it or lose it" says Chairman Don - I think
he's referring to a certain shop!**

33.

The Parish Council have now received information on the future of the new shop erected by the Bucks Housing Association Ltd at the top of Chapel Hill.

Until recently the Housing Association had intended to run the shop with a Manager and provide all finance; any surplus to be split between the Association and village Charities. A complete change of plan seems to have been made late last year and at Christmas we received a letter for distribution to every house in Speen detailing their present intentions.

We have been informed that tenants have been found and the legal work regarding the Lease is proceeding. The prospective tenants already run a Delicatessen Shop in the London area and will open the new shop in Speen on the same basis. We are assured that the Lease contains covenants as to how the business shall be run and what goods would be on offer. We understand that the tenants do outside catering and the shop will be the base also for this operation with the upper room used for on site refreshments. The Housing Association are fitting out the shop internally ready for occupation.

An Off Licence and Lottery outlet will be applied for. At present the Post Office remains in the Village Hall once a week until the new shopkeeper has qualified as SubPostmaster. They propose opening three mornings a week - Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Owing to the bus times (providing public transport from North Dean) we are suggesting Post Office opening one afternoon in place of one of the mornings. The new Post Office will offer the same services at the Prestwood office who run the present facility in the Village Hall.

The village so far has shown a lot of enthusiasm for the shop; when it opens we do ask residents to use it as much as possible (if you don't use it you will lose it!). Many residents have their pensions and allowances paid direct into their Bank - why not change to collection at the Post Office each week as many of us already do - meet your friends and keep up with latest gossip! It works wonders for the community spirit and helps keep the facility for those less mobile who depend entirely on the Post Office for their weekly cash.


It looks as if the shop would be open before the Post Office; the present restricted service will remain in the Village Hall until the new office and staff are ready. We would add our appreciation to the Prestwood Postmaster and particularly to Mick Wood for maintaining the service in the village over the last 10 years.

Don White (Don't blame Don if this is no longer quite the latest - blame me for being slow to get my act together to put this issue on the street. Ed.)

NORTH DEAN V SPEEN GOLF DAY

Tuesday 26th May has been booked for the next Challenge Match. Will all players wishing to take part please contact Dave Evans on 488495 or John Rogers on 562041.

More hens than people in pre-war Speen, writes Frances Caldwell...



In the 1930s as in previous decades, many backyard flocks of poultry were kept in Speen as well as poultry foraging in general farmyards. Along Hampden Road poultry were farmed on "free range", on what is now Cornerways, opposite, on the Woodview Drive land, and on the White House fields, while Mr and Mrs Gilbert at Primrose Cottage smallholding (all Monkton Way) included, amongst a great variety of produce hens; ducks and turkeys. The turkeys thrived despite much mud, in defiance of expert advice that they should not have survived.

The breed of poultry kept, included Rhode Islands and Light Sussex (the most numerous), Leghorn (good layers but poor table birds), Wyandotes, Plymouth Rocks and Barnevelders (the last being excellent for hatching and rearing chicks). The birds were fed on wheat and maize grains, mash supplement with cooked potatoes and swill, greens in winter snow time and crushed egg shell and grit in a separate hoppers, for the birds to consume as they wanted.

The use of artificial light is now routine in poultry farming, and American use of artificial light to increase duration and intensity of light for dairy cows was reported this January in Farmers Weekly as confirmed by research at Bangor six years ago. But the use of light to increase day light hours for laying poultry was pioneered in the late twenties and early thirties. In Speen, at the White House, kerosene lamps were used at first, being placed in the laying houses as winter evening light faded, then dimmed and extinguished about three hours later. Later electric light were used; these could not be dimmed but almost invariably all birds were roosting when the time came for "light out".

Such use of artificial lighting increased egg production in winter due to the prolonged feeding time for the birds and to avoid autumn moulting of layers, especially new birds that had previously curtailed winter egg production.

The winter supply of fresh eggs, with prolonged keeping in domestic refrigerators in some cases by the late 1930s, obviated the previous need to preserve eggs from summer for use in winter, by placing them in wire inner liners in large metal buckets filled with waterglass solution stored in cool conditions i.e. on a stone floor in a larder.

To find out the egg production of individual birds as well as of pens, records had to be kept. Each bird had a numbered metal ring on one leg and trap-nets were used in the laying houses. The birds used to lay in the straw lined nests, and the bird released a simple wooded trip when entering the nest box, where it was confined until released, when it's number was recorded and the eggs collected. Obviously the release of birds had to be done regularly and often enough to avoid prolonged isolation from food and water.

The work involved in feeding, watering, egg collection and clearing out ensured that people were about most of the time, helping to protect the flocks from foxes and dogs. But the birds had to be shut in secure poultry houses early in the evening and wire netting became more and more essential to make protected enclosures. Rats were a pest, attracted both by poultry food stores and hayricks: on one occasion rats killed 120 chicks, presumably for the blood or amusement, since none were eaten. Another pest that made its presence felt was the flea, held at bay by the use of Keatings Powder

in nest boxes and on birds whose dust baths had not controlled infestation.

The electrical revolution profoundly changed the life of people and animals not least by providing so much longer a "day" in winter, just as now home-based work should save much of the time and frustration of commuting.

All quiet on the Speen front says Paul of Residents Assoc.

Just a short note as things are very quiet at the moment. The only matter of interest remains the Stores and the apparent change of policy by the Buckinghamshire Housing Association concerning the management of the shop.

It is now clear that, for reasons which can only be financially based, the shop is to be let as a commercial venture albeit on a reduced rental. It must be disappointing for those who put their names forward to help in the shop that the village consultation process came to such an abrupt end with little or no explanation. One point to emerge is that the planning permission for the shop does not specify what sort of shop it is to be leaving the possibility of any type being available.

It would appear from a recent conversation with Hunt and Nash that negotiations are ongoing with a sandwich bar proprietor from High Wycombe to take up a lease and run the shop as a village stores. An alternative enquiry from the owners of the Walters Ash stores has now been withdrawn after difficulties were experienced. When asked about the likely time scales to complete the contract Hunt and Nash were uncertain but hoped all would be in place by the Spring.

The other outstanding point is the missing section of footpath to link that constructed by the Housing Association with the existing. Wycombe District Council seem reluctant to press the matter even though there would appear to be a shortcoming with the implementation of the planning consent regarding the vision splay. If you are concerned about this and wish to make your view known then write to Mr. G P Smith Environmental Services Dept. W.D.C. the more interest we show the greater will be theirs.

Jan 1998



NORTH DEAN FORTHCOMING EVENTS 1998

March Sat 21st.	Beetle Drive 7.30pm. 4.00 to include light supper. Bring your own drink.
April Mon. 20th	A.G.M. 7.45pm. for 8.00pm start. Coffee & Biscuits. Nominations for treasurer.
May Sat. 16th	Treasurer Hunt. Details to follow
June Sun 14th.	Lunch time BBQ. Details to follow
July Sun 5th.	Pot Luck Lunch. Bring a favourite dish. (Plus receipt if you can part with it).
August Sat 8th	Summer Fete. <u>NEW!</u> A Photograph Competition will be introduced this year. 2 Open classes. (General) for adults & children. Anyone interested, ring me for Fete schedule.
Woodland Walk	Hopefully a midweek walk can be organised by John Morris (small woodland project), around Bottom Woods Radnage in June - Will keep you posted.

EASTER HOLIDAY AND SUMMER TERM COACHING 1998

Speen Tennis Court

Easter Coaching. Monday to Thursday 6th - 9th April. (Four Days)

1100 - 1100	8 - 12 year olds	10.00
1100 - 1145	6 - 8 year olds	8.00
1145 - 1215	4 - 6 year olds	8.00

Summer Term Coaching w/c 20th April to w/c 29th June (10 week)

Thursday 1000 - 1100	Ladies'	25.00
Thursday 1100 - 1200	Ladies'	25.00
Thursday 1545 - 1616	4-6 yr. olds	15.00
Thursday 1630 - 1715	6-8 yr. olds	15.00
Thursday 1715 - 1800	8-12 yr. olds	15.00

Any ladies wishing to sign up for coaching, including complete beginner, please get in touch. We would like to accommodate anyone who is interested.

Top reserve place, complete the form below and return to Cherry Seekins, Glenwood Cottage, Hampden Road, Speen. (Next to King William IV) or telephone me on 488355. If you would like tennis coaching and feel that none of these groups are suitable, please let me know.

High Wycombe Riding For Disabled

The splendid sum of £400 was raised by Andy Hawes, from sponsorship of the London Triathlon event he took part in last year.

This money will be used to help run the group for local disabled riders, where David Freeman, on Taso, enjoys his weekly riding sessions.

Jo Huggard kindly loans the superb horses and her excellent facilities at Shana Riding School for the R.D.A. group.

Anyone who would like to help with the group on Friday afternoons, or would like further information, please phone me, *Gloria Holmes* on 488420

FROM OUR DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

As I write, many of you will be agonizing about the proposed cuts to services by the County Council, who this year at least will have to carry our social services without any increase of funds from Central Government.

The news from the District Council is much more cheerful, as I am sure you will agree if you have read your copy of Community News.

Community News is delivered to every door throughout the District, and the latest copy explained clearly the aims and objectives of the District Council and how these correspond to the duties of each committee. It then goes on to illustrate the many positive actions carried out on your behalf as a result of the decisions taken by these committees.

I know that some of you are incredibly self-sufficient and avoid visits to town, but others, requiring leisure facilities and shops, cannot fail to notice the remarkable changes that are being made to HIGH WYCOMBE, details of which have all appeared in Community News.

I am giving your editor a copy of WDC response to the Minister's Consultation Paper on housing figures. Some of the "demand" for housing is not always "need" but "aspiration". Most of the demand, as you know, arises from divided families and people wanting to live alone, or finding themselves in that position, and of course the many elderly couples who are living longer. So we need some smaller attractive properties, but builders can get more from their expensive building plots if they build houses rather than bungalows. During my time at WDC we have only succeeded in stipulating bungalows when the landscape or the surrounding buildings made absolutely necessary.

On the 5th February I was the Council's representative on the Local Government Association's Rural Commission. The final speaker was Michael Meacher MP, Minister for the Environment and the Countryside DETR.

Suspecting that he might be lambasted during Question Time for the "gaff" of the Deputy Leader, he

joked: "Well Mr Prescott did say" - "A previous Labour Government was responsible for the GREEN BELT and this Government aims to build on that achievement."

The saga of Speen Stores just goes on and on! One day my hopes are lifted and the next day my heart is in my boots. As I write, I do believe that if it ever does open, together with the Post Office it will be in no small measure to the great efforts of your Parish Councillors and their Clerk.

Thank you for the warm welcome I received in your Chapel during the week for Christian Unity (It was a dreadful January night outside).

Finally, congratulations on your magazine - it is now better than Lacey Green's HALLMARK, which although well-produced, has lost some of the contributors, whereas SPEEN AND NORTH DEAN NEWS has fantastic photos and loads of really interesting articles. (*Spare our blushes, Jean, we don't win 'em all!* Ed.)

Jean Gabbittas

SPEEN PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION

CONTRIBUTION TO SPEEN & NORTH DEAN NEWS

The winter period is usually a quiet time for the Playing Field Committee so my contribution to the News this issue is to take the opportunity to say a few thank yous on behalf of the Committee and of course all the people who use the Field.

You may have already noticed that the footpath onto the Playing Field at the tennis court end has recently been tarmaced. What you perhaps will not be aware of is that James and Suzanne Thompson of Pond Cottage have kindly had this work done without cost to the Playing Field. Thank you very much it is a huge improvement and much appreciated.

Many thanks also to Mr & Mrs Darnton at The Old Cottage for keeping the hedge trimmed alongside the footpath it is one job less for the Committee to do and we are grateful.

Knowing that Bob Johnston is a font of local knowledge, I asked him where I could get a sign made to have put on the new under 5.s play area - not only did Bob have it made and delivered he also paid for it personally. Bob we are, yet again, indebted to you, many thanks.

Last but by no means least, a HUGE personal thank you to Peter Collett who has kindly agreed to take over the Playing Field Fortnightly Draw bookkeeping. I cannot reiterate enough times how important the income from the Draw is to the upkeep of the Field. If you are new to the village and have not joined yet please consider doing so, it's an easy way to make a contribution and there is always the chance that you will win a prize!

To all the Draw collectors, once again thank you. Corrine Symonds has taken over the Abbotswood round from Pat Ledger, thank you Corrine. Jon Critoph has unfortunately become too busy with his many other activities to continue collecting the Turnip End/Highwood Bottom round, thank you Jon for the time you did manage to do the round. We haven't found a new collector yet - any chance of a volunteer, please???

Miles Awdry, Treasurer of the Playing Field Association gave notice a year ago, as indeed did I that we would be stepping down from our roles at the 1998 AGM - it's coming up in March/April time (look out for the date on the Notice Board). The Committee will be a bit short-handed without some new recruits so COME ALONG PLEASE and take your turn, it is very worthwhile.

Thank you very much Miles for all your hard work, our finances are in much better shape than when you took over. Finally, finally thank you from me to everyone who has helped me in my role as Chairman.

Jeanne Hanford

PS: On 31st March there was a meeting of the Playing Field people. One result of this was the retirement of Jeanne as Chair and the election of Mr Keith Jones in her place. Keith's mobile number is 0831 588311. Ed.



The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 Wycombe District Dogs (Fouling of Land) Order 1998

Councillor John Rogers has asked us to highlight these recent measures aimed against dog owners who permit their animals to foul certain public places. Here is some of the printed material sent to us for this purpose:

I would advise you that our dog wardens will be patrolling all the land covered by the Order, but as you will realise, this patrolling will not be very intensive due the large area of land covered by the Order. They will also concentrate their activities in the areas most frequently used by the public. The dog wardens are authorised to issue fixed penalty notices to offenders which they will be doing in appropriate circumstances. If, however, you wish any Members of your Council or employees of your Council to be so authorised, then if you provide Mr Smith of this Division with their title, (eg Council Member, Park Assistant), he will arrange for further information to be sent to you on this matter. With regard to enforcement in general, the dog wardens are always happy to visit dog owners suspected of breaching this legislation, to offer informal advice. Any names and addresses or car registrations of such persons should be passed to Mr Smith, along with the time and place of the alleged incident. All complainant details will be kept confidential.

LAND DESIGNATED BY DESCRIPTION

- (a) The footway of any highway or any public place within the District of Wycombe except where the speed limit of the highway exceeds 40mph.
- (b) Any grassed areas in the said District which are:
 - (i) adjacent to the highway or the footway of a highway except where the speed limit of the highway exceeds 40mph; and
 - (ii) maintained in good order
- (c) All parks, recreation grounds and open spaces maintained by the Council
- (d) Footpaths in the said district.
- (e) Pedestrianised areas in the said district.
- (f) All grounds of schools under the control of Buckinghamshire County Council in the said district.



MAXIMUM PENALTY £1000

John also included a long list of "Land designated specifically" where dog wardens will be patrolling. The only land within our readership area which was listed, however, was the Play area and field, Speen Road, North Dean. Of course, dogs are not permitted to be exercised at all on the Speen playing field. And we all respect that, don't we. Ed.

Titanic success for Speer man at Oscars

ART director Rob Laing was part of the art team which scooped an Oscar for the film Titanic.

Mr Laing, 61, of Flowers Bottom, Speen, said winning the production design and set decoration award at this week's ceremony was 'fantastic.'

Mr Laing, one of four art directors on the film, was responsible for the interior design of the ship's set.

Mr Laing, whose Los Angeles-based son, Martin, attended the ceremony, works for 20th Century-Fox's art department whose production designer Peter Lamont, collected the Oscar.

Although he did not make it to Los Angeles for

the ceremony, Mr Laing videotaped the ceremony and watched it the next day.

He said: "It was fantastic to win an Oscar."

"It was a very exciting way to celebrate the culmination of a year's work on the project."

"It was a nice thing to recreate the authentic interior of the ship."

The 11 Oscars won by Titanic at this year's awards equalled the record of Ben Hur in 1959.



THE ROAD TO MOROCCO - Gloria and friends are Morocco Bound.

Dear Peter,

I enclose a Press Release which you might like to include in the Newsletter.

For a number of years I have been involved in helping to train guide dogs for the blind, as a puppy walker. Now I have the opportunity to raise funds for this excellent charity.

And the trek across the Atlas Mountains sounds like an exciting adventure, together with helping some visually impaired participants. What better challenge could I look forward to in my 60th year!

At present I am "puppy walking" Sara, one of the pups I bred for the Guide Dogs Association. We hope that she will qualify as a Guide Dog at the end of this year.

If anyone would like to sponsor me for this charity trek, please phone 01494 488420

Thanks and regards,

Gloria

The Trek

Basically, to summarise the press release, it is to announce that a party of 75 British walkers intend to head off to Morocco in June this year, each raising £2000 for charity. It is the first sponsored walk organised in that country by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. The party, including some visually impaired participants, plan to walk through an area centered around the city of Marrakech, and through scenery few westerners will have seen. They will go through quiet villages, climb the second highest mountain in the

Atlas range, Jebel M'Goun, and cross raging mountain streams.

The press release also points out that as well as breeding and training guide dogs, the G.D.B.A. also does other useful things for blind and partially sighted people, including a reahabilitation centre to help people cope with life when visually impaired. They also teach braille and use of the white cane, invest in research into dog health and into the causes, treatment and prevention of blindness. They also have two hotels which cater specially for the needs of guide dog owners, their families and their guide dogs.

For more information on the trek, called "Mountains and mules of Morocco" phone Nick Cherwood on 01539 735080, or for information on the G.D.B.A. itself phone David Holding on 0118 983 5555. Ed.

REMEMBERING SPEEN - Martin Stockley reports on a trip down memory lane

March 28th was a day of reminiscences for residents of Speen.

Those with long memories of life in the village were invited to chat about old times over a cup of tea in the Village Hall. It was all part of the planning for Speen's Millenium celebration next year. The stories coming out of the afternoon's gathering will help to piece together a history of the village, out of which an entertainment in words and music to celebrate life in Speen across the years will be presented.

About 20 folk turned out to talk about their experiences and memories, and a number of others helped by prompting the discussion groups, making notes and serving refreshments - talking can be thirsty work.

The writer (Peter Joucla) who has already been booked to provide a script for the event next year attended the meeting so as to sample the flavour of the village. Bob Johnston laid out a number of fascinating copies of old documents, articles, maps and photographs for people to mull over and Wilf Tilbury brought along some photos reflecting the cricketing prowess Speen once possessed (Wilf was a crack player himself). David Eckle exhibited the ledger book of Stevens the tailor who used to live in the King William IV pub in the last century.

It is hoped that there will be follow-up visits to some of the participants to obtain more details of their personal recollections. Meanwhile **Bob Johnston would still like to hear from anyone who has any documents, photographs or other mementos which relate to Speen's past. So, if you can help in this respect, please give him a call on 488593.** We would also welcome help from anyone with computer facilities and skills who would be prepared to type and collate the information we have acquired so far.

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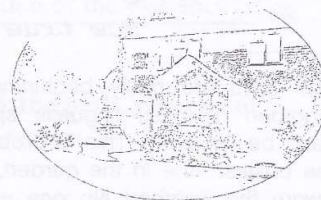
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Weeding now will save a lot of work later, says Ted.

How true those words are - even today...



The days are really beginning to lengthen now, so I guess spring can't be far away. This is probably the busiest time in the garden, but beware the weather! No one would doubt that our weather patterns seem to be changing; it has been relatively mild this winter, which might lull us into a false sense of security. Spring weather can be treacherous, blowing hot and cold, with a deceiving warm, sunny period somewhere in it, when the temptation is to go out and plant and sow with great abandon, only to have the seedlings frozen as they germinate, and newly shooting plants blasted by fresh onslaughts of wind and snow.

However, your main preoccupation now will be to get things off to a start, by preparing the ground in various ways, and by sowing and planting towards the end of early spring. Apart from clearing up and putting right the damage caused by winter storms, weeding now will save you a lot of work later.

In the kitchen garden we can sow seeds outdoors of broad beans, leeks and parsnips. Under glass we can sow brussels sprouts, summer cabbage and summer cauliflower, lettuce, peas and radish. In a heated greenhouse we can sow cucumber, pepper and tomato.

A little later we can really get started with sowing beetroot, broad beans, sprouting broccoli, carrot, pasley and turnip.

We can plant out onion sets and start sprouting potatoes. In the

summer garden we can start sowing hardy annuals as well as, under glass, half-hardy annuals. We can also start planting out. Divide snowdrops while they are still green. Start mowing that lawn! And keep weeding! Increase your stock by taking cuttings.

Start pruning those shrubs which can be pruned in spring and feed shrubs and roses. Protect new shoots against frost. Keep mowing!

Finally a reminder of our two shows, in the spring and early autumn. Please support them; they are good fun and a measure of how good a gardener you are. Also, we hope to have another Open Gardens Day this year. **If you haven't taken part in the past, but would like to open and show off your garden to the public, please contact me.**

It only remains for me to wish you good gardening, watch that weather - and keep gardening!

Ted Drew

(to whom apologies for late publication)

The Speen Horticultural Society has put on some very interesting slide talks in the past, and not always strictly about gardening. In December there was one by a couple who went on a trip to photograph some of the varied and unique flowering plants which grow in the Cape area of South Africa, where political change had made touring more acceptable. The area is roughly the southern hemisphere equivalent of the Mediterranean. I

was amused that someone in the audience seemed unsure that the seasons were opposite to those in our hemisphere.

Many of the plants in the Cape are tantalisingly close to being hardy in favoured parts of this country, especially those from mountain areas. In fact, with growing trade links post apartheid, each year sees another group of South African plants being experimentally marketed in England, and some of these will succeed to enrich our gardens in the next millennium. I expect the majority will only prove to be summer hardy, though.

Then, in February, Peter Symonds made us all look afresh at a modest little lane in Speen, namely Coleheath Bottom.

Peter had been taking slide pictures of this bridleway and slightly beyond, for about six years and he gave us the pleasure of seeing them all. His method was to use a variety of lenses, from macro to telescopic, so whether it was a tiny insect or a bird many yards from the camera, it filled the screen before us. Sometimes it was just a slide of an autumn leaf - it's out there and it's beautiful and one can understand how it enriches Peter's experience, looking at every living object as the potential subject for a lovely colour photo. That he might go to Africa on photo safari is understandable, but he was also able to put together a truly worthwhile show from all the modest life forms in and around our muddy little lane. *Ed.*

Banana bonanza

The time has come to release bananas from the captivity of warm glasshouses and use them in our gardens argues Tim Miles

BANANA plants conjure up memories of sun-filled holidays abroad, or a visit to one of our great botanical gardens. However, it is quite possible to grow banana plants outdoors in many parts of Britain, either planted out during the frost-free months or as a permanent planting. These are not the edible fruiting kinds but spectacular ornamental species with magnificent paddle-shaped leaves up to 4m (13ft) in length.

Ted will be round this autumn to judge Speen's best grown banana plantation - so get to it!

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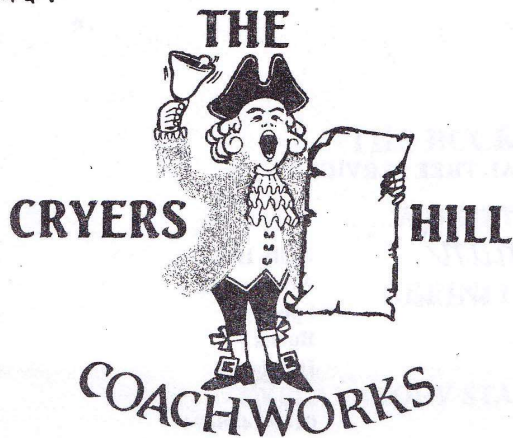
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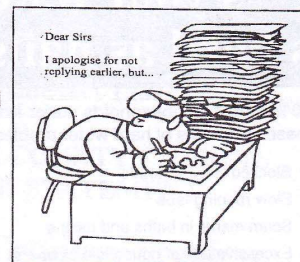
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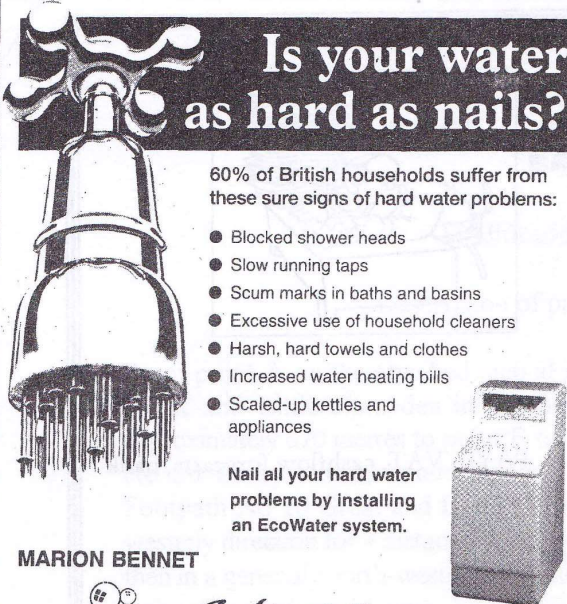
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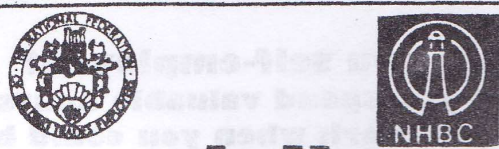
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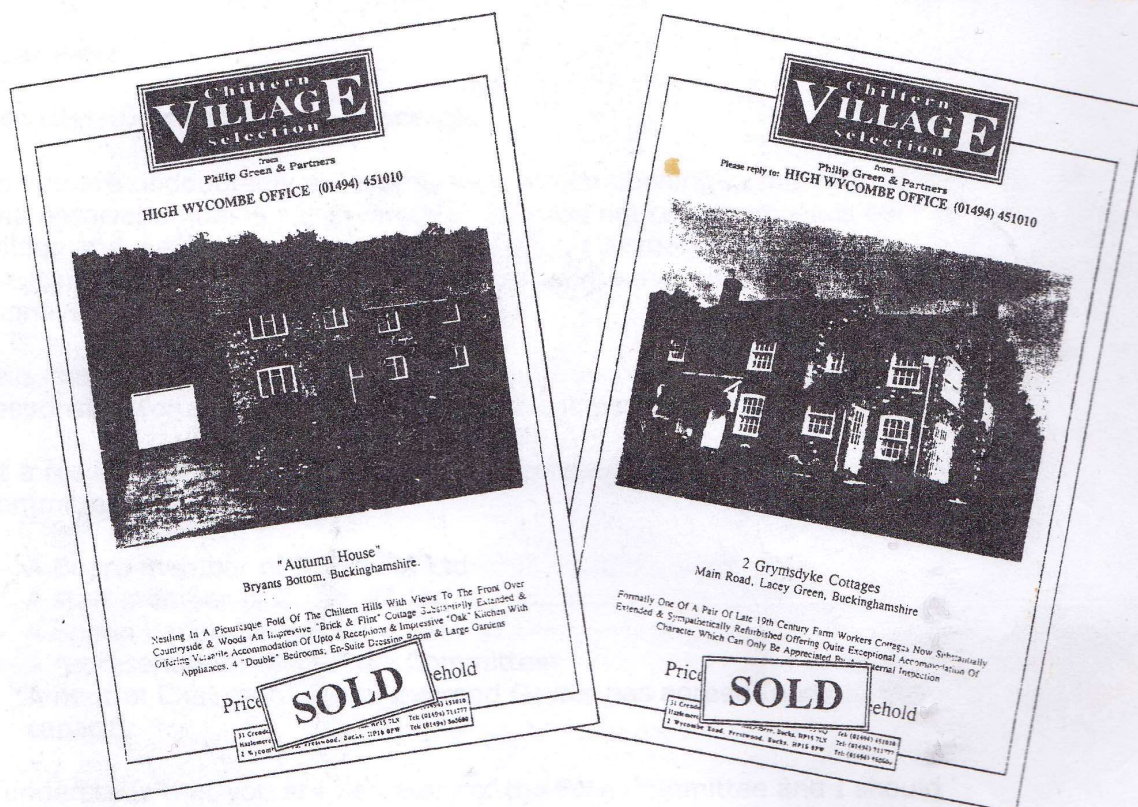
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