

# SPEEN AND NORTH DEAN NEWS

*Issue Fourteen Summer 1998*

Speen gardens  
open 19th July



## SPEEN FETE '98 WAS GREAT DESPITE THE RAIN

The rain gods had declared war and it would be even wetter on the Sunday, so on balance Saturday seemed the better bet for a family afternoon out, and around early afternoon the skies were becoming a lighter shade of grey. Thus it was that the people came, not in such large numbers as on a sunny occasion, but enough to make it all worthwhile. Paul tells me that the takings were similar to last year, around £1800 and with less outlay, because this was a low-key year. However, the drizzle slowly increased and we all became damp somewhat imperceptibly - and no-one cared too much (anyway, it was too wet to walk home). Then it looked as if we were not going to be able to hold the children's races with the downpour getting heavier, but we decided to go for it and I only had to mention the word "prizes" to get them all lining up for a skid to the finish. Then up went all those balloons into the leaden sky to a great cheer from the crowd and it was over. Thanks to everyone who helped out so bravely at this the wettest fete for many years. It was fun. *Peter*





# SUPPORT YOUR VILLAGE SHOP

As they say - everyone gets their five minutes of fame, well perhaps not everyone. I don't know if David and Sharon have had any previous five minutes of that commodity or whether they'll be "famous" again, but during the past week they've appeared in the national press and on national radio. An article which appeared in the Independent On Sunday was noticed by the BBC and an interview followed on Radio 4's "You and Yours" a few days later.

When I spoke to him this Thursday, an hour or two after the broadcast, David seemed remarkably calm about it all - fame had not gone to his head, so to speak. Sharon was quite amused when people began to pull up to the shop to tell them they were "on the radio" (it was pre-recorded, of course). When I joked that they might not make a quick million with this project, David just said it wasn't about money but the quality of life living in the country (he had previously been running a snack bar in London's West End).

Sharon said that from the first two months' experience, if things continue to progress as they are then the shop should become viable. "And I'm getting all the gossip" she joked. "So the newsletter can come to you for information in future then?" - I queried, at least half seriously.

Certainly the shop not only looks good but is becoming that place where people bump into one another (I don't mean the cars). Sharon hopes that although people still have to do most of their shopping at the supermarket, she hopes that, in order to keep the shop afloat, they will consciously buy as much of their requirements as they can from Speen Stores. Hopefully the shop will eventually be able to carry a small supply of fruit and vegetables even though these items are extremely perishable, because that would certainly draw the custom of more people, which might balance out the losses on the perishables. Meanwhile Sharon and David feel sure that the only way forward for the small village shop, these days, is to find ways of specialising.

David and Sharon have already fallen in love with Speen and Speen seems to have taken them to its heart. It is their ambition to come here to live. At present they have to travel every day from Seer Green. Let's hope that all their ambitions are fulfilled. Welcome aboard, Sharon and David.

*Peter*

5 JULY 1998 INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

## Pesto comes to the rescue of village shops



David Pirolli (above) runs an Italian delicatessen in the heart of the English countryside: 'It doesn't seem unusual to me. It's professional common

IT COULD be described as a case of *l'odore* coming to the English countryside. Where once the village shop sold Ruffles and corned beef, it is now just as likely to offer Parma ham and a bottle of Montepulciano, writes Mark Rowe.

Local stores are having to be ever more inventive to survive the threat from out-of-town supermarkets. While the supermarkets offer villagers with transport the chance to buy in bulk and buy cheaply, they leave village shops and pubs facing da-

maic falls in trade. To reach the village of Speen, in Buckinghamshire, you must travel through classic English countryside dotted with hedgerows, rolling hills and one-track lanes. But at journey's end you will find the most Italian of delicatessens. Walk into the shop, which also has a post office, and you are met with the smell of fresh bolognese sauce and a counter full of dolce latte, mozzarella, olives, fresh pasta and Parma ham. Instead of beer you can buy farin.

"It doesn't seem unusual to

me. We did some research before we started. This is not a gimmick, it's professional common sense," said manager David Pirolli, who used to run a snack bar in London's West End. "There's no way you can compete with the supermarkets unless you live in a remote area where people have to use you. Here it's just five miles to Wycombe."

Until he opened five weeks ago, Speen had had no shop for nine years. "It's really bringing the village to life," he said. "It gives the older people a bit of in-

dependence to come here to draw their pension."

A few miles down the road in the village of Cookham Dean, a place with one of the highest per capita incomes in Britain, you will find a similar message. Sam and Rhonda Surman keep their shop going by offering fine wines and fresh, good-quality bread. They see their store as a "bugger-me" shop, as in "bugger me, I've got to buy something."

"People don't do their weekly shopping with us. That's where some shops go wrong," said Mrs Surman. "We can't compete on price so we compete on quality. If we sold a thin sliced white loaf it would cost more than the supermarket, so we sell freshly baked bread instead."

The villagers understand they have to use us or lose us. Someone called us the 'village pump' by which she meant the shop keeps the lifeblood of the village running."

The important role a pub can play in a village was recognised in Cookham Dean 11 years ago. Faced with the possibility of clo-

sure or conversion to a theme pub, 57 locals, including former Goodies comedian Tim Brooke-Taylor, bought shares to turn the Jolly Farmer into what they claim became Britain's first community-owned pub.

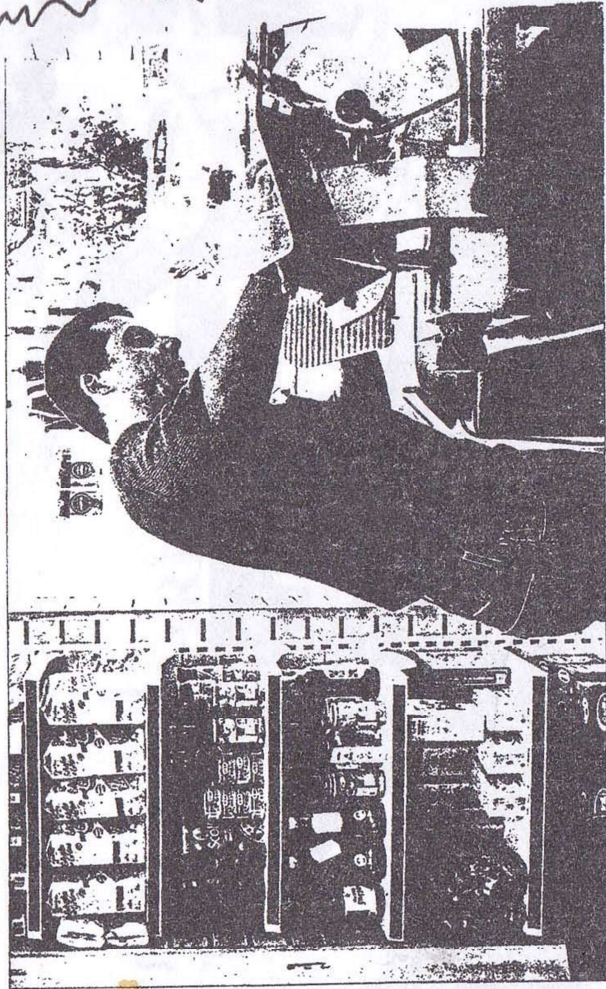
The picture is less cheerful in the village of Christall in Essex, where the only pub and only shop are both up for sale, the owner claiming he cannot make them profitable. Locals are campaigning to prevent their conversion into houses, saying that if both close the village will be-

come a community of six with no community facilities. The Red Cow in Chiswick, a thatched building which operated as an inn since it is attached to a barn dated 1100. The adjacent community-run on a not-for-profit basis, with some 40 people out behind the counter.

Michel Perks, who is chairman of the shop committee, said: "Out-of-town shopping killed local shops. In a village, this with a shop and pub."



# Pesto comes to the rescue of village shops



David Piroli (above) runs an Italian delicatessen in the heart of the English countryside. 'It doesn't seem unusual to me. It's professional common sense.'

IT COULD be described as a case of *la dolce vita* coming to the English countryside. Where once the village shop sold Ruffles and corned beef, it is now just as likely to offer Parma ham and a bottle of Montepulciano, writes Mark Rowe.

Local stores are having to be ever more inventive to survive the threat from out-of-town supermarkets. While the supermarkets offer villagers with transport the chance to buy in bulk and buy cheaply, they leave village stores and pubs facing dr-

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Walk into the shop, which also has a post office, and you are met with the smell of fresh balsamic sauce and a counter full of delicatessen. Mozzarella, olives, fresh pasta and Parma ham. Instead of beer you can buy Barolo.

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me. We did some research before we started. This is not a gimmick, it's professional common sense," said manager David Piroli, who used to run a snack bar in London's West End. "There's no way you can compete with the supermarkets unless you live in a remote area where people have to use you. Here it's just five miles to Wycombe."

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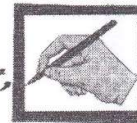
The Red Cow in Chirshall, a thatched building which operated as an inn since 1111, is attached to a barn dating from 1100. The adjacent community-run on a rota basis, with some 40 people, including out behind the court, rota basis.

Michael Parks, who is chairman of the shop committee, "Out-of-town shopping killed local shops. In a village this with a shop and pub..."





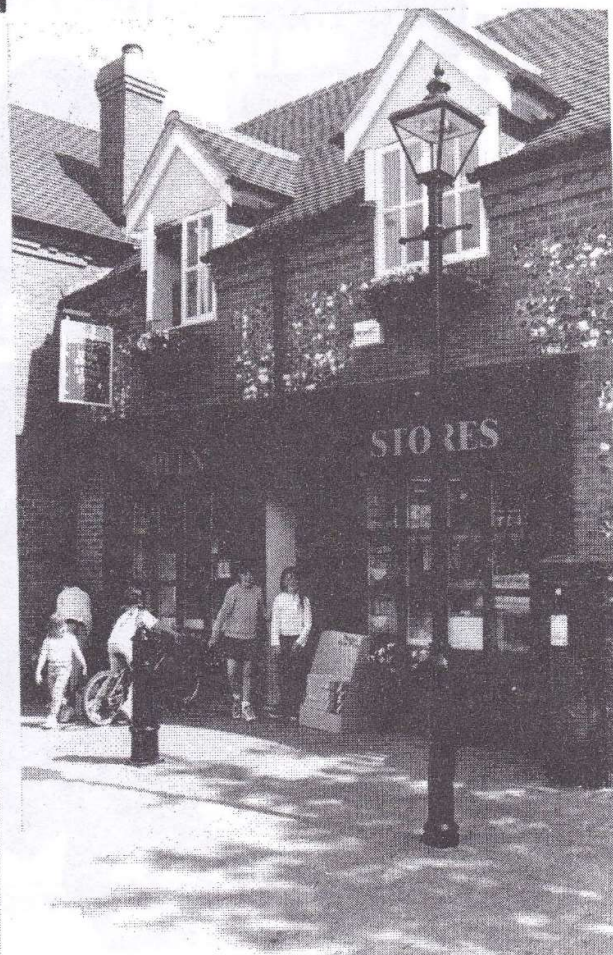
*Dear Editor,*



The Speen Stores would like to say thank you to all the villagers from Speen and surrounding areas for their loyalty and support over the past eight weeks. We hope that their support continues in the future.

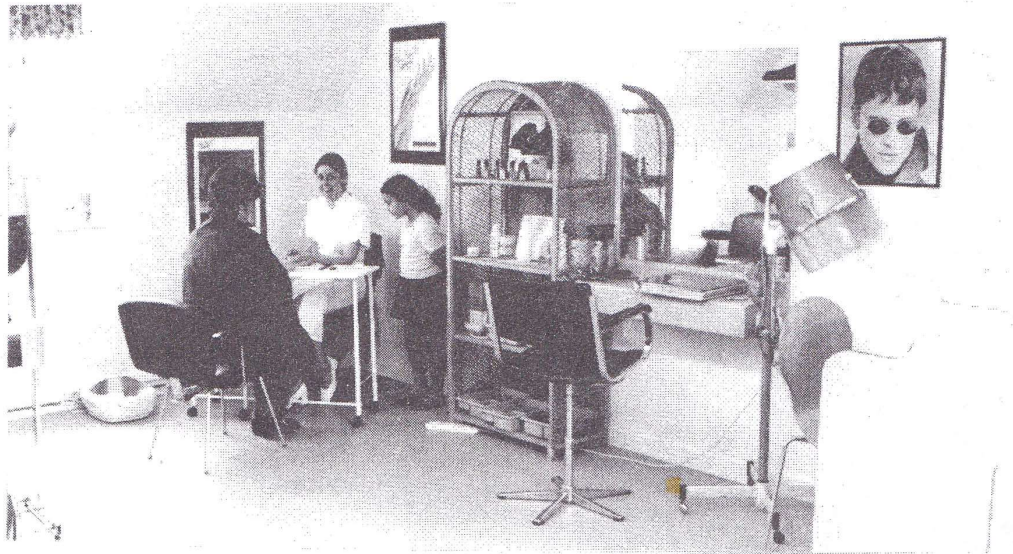
Thank you

*David & Sharon*





At HAIRWORKS above the shop it's  
Hairdressing by Teresa and Beauty Treatment by Lucille



*Teresa Litchfield*

*Lucille Attridge*





**Ladies and Gents  
Hair and Beauty Salon**

**NOW OPEN**

**above Speen Stores**

**Exclusive beauty treatments available including  
special occasion make-up and nail extensions**

**Top to toe pamper morning/afternoons**

**GIFT VOUCHERS  
available**

**Special rates for O.A.P's and Children**

**Call now to make an appointment**



**LACEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING  
HELD AT  
METHODIST SCHOOLROOM, LACEY GREEN  
ON WEDNESDAY, 13TH MAY, 1998  
AT 7-30PM**

**PRESENT**

Councillor D.E. White (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs. J. Awdry  
Councillor D. Claydon  
Councillor Mrs. C. Davies

**APOLOGIES**

Councillor R. Gosling  
Councillor T.V. Molesworth

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 1998/99** Councillor D.E. White was re-elected  
Chairman for 1998/99

**ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN 1998/99** Councillor R. Gosling was re-elected  
Vice-Chairman for 1998/99

**APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

(1) Wycombe District Association of Local Councils - Councillor D. Claydon agreed to  
continue to represent the Council a further appointment will be made when the casual  
vacancy has been filled.

(2) Wycombe District Road Use and Safety Committee - Councillor T. Molesworth

(3) Princes Risborough Charity - Councillor Mrs. J. Awdry and Mr. Brian Panter. Their  
term of office expires in the year 2000.

(4) Princes Risborough Adult Education Committee - The Chairman to continue as the  
Council's representative

(5) School Governors :-

St. John's Combined School Lacey Green - Mrs. L. Gaffin

Speen First School - Mr. D. Evans

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21st APRIL 1998**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st April 1998 in  
the Speen Village Hall, which had been circulated, were confirmed as a true record, and  
signed by the Chairman.

**MATTERS ARISING**

(a) **CASUAL VACANCY** - Lacey Green/Loosley Row Ward. An application from  
Mrs L.J. Moorcroft or Ardengrove Main Road Lacey Green was tabled. Council agreed  
to defer any decisions until the full Council were present to discuss the subject.

(b) **BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION** - Confirmation that the application for  
Speen had been accepted. Judging to take place early in June.



(c) DOGS (FOULING OF LAND) ACT 1996 - Confirmation from the Wycombe District Council that footpaths crossing agricultural or forestry land are not covered by this Act.

(d) PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS - Confirmed that application has been made for the children's playgrounds at Lacey Green and Speen to be inspected.

(e) SPEED CAMERA SIGN New Road. Confirmed that this has been reinstated.

(f) FOOTPATH NO.9 GREAT AND LITTLE HAMPDEN - Confirmed that a letter has been sent to the Buckinghamshire County Council objecting to the change from footpath to bridleway.

(g) SPEEN SEAT The Clerk reported on a visit to World's End Nursery he had noticed bench seats similar to our requirements at half the cost of the seat the Council were considering. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would visit the Nurseries to make further enquiries

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Kill your Speed Campaign 1998 - Letter from Buckinghamshire County Council advertising the continuance of this campaign now in its fourth year .

Highway Tree Policy - Addendum to the policy document received. This confirms the policy in favour of new tree planting and the replacement of dying trees It is also made clear that whilst the Council will take responsibility for replacement trees it does not have the money to fund the initial concentrated attention such as watering and would look to other parties to take this responsibility.

Local Area Forums - Date next meeting is 10th November 1998.

Audit of Parish Council Accounts. This is expected to take place between October and December 1998

### **REPORTS**

Speen Millenium - The Chairman reported that the Speen Millenium Celebrations had at his requested appointed a committee to manage the celebrations and arrange fund raising.

Speen Finances - The Committee appointed to control the allocation of money from the Buckinghamshire Housing Association from the Speen Shop project is still short of one member as the Speen Fete Committee has not responded to the request to take up a position , The Chairman has asked the Buckinghamshire Housing Association to approach the Speen Women's Institute to fill the vacancy. The Chairman also mentioned that the Children's playground required new surfacing and he felt this was an ideal subject for funding from this fund.

### **PLANNING REGISTER**

The following planning applications were considered by the Council }-

98/05817 - Primrose Cottage, Flowers Bottom Lane, Speen- Front porch - No objections

98/05595 - 24 Woodbank Loosley Row - decorative lamp post (retrospective) - No objections

98/05526 - 7 Violet Close, Loosley Row - Demolish existing porch construct new porch and playroom, retaining wall - No objections



98/05502 - Hill View Lower Road, Loosley Row - two storey rear extension - NO

objections

The following decision have been made by the Wycombe District Council

98/05526 - 7 Violet Close - as above - Permitted

98/05384- 14 New Road, Walters Ash - Rear extension - Permitted

98/05381 - Bitfield, Westlands Road, Lacey Green - dormer windows in rear roof slope - Permitted

97/07104 - Hillside Caravan Site, Speen - Variation to allow siting 9 instead of 8 -

Permitted - Council were disappointed at this decision and are considering writing to the Department of Environment as this decision is contrary to a decision made by an Inspector at an appeal a few years ago.

08/07130 - Barns adjacent to Donnybrook, Main Road, Walters Ash - Change of use from agriculture to business use - Permitted

98/05537 - Wayside Hampden Road, Speen - Deferred for a site meeting.

Weekly Planning Bulletins Nos. 16 - 18 received and noted

### **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AS AT 30th APRIL 1998**

The Clerk presented the accounts for the period 1st March to 30th April 1998 which were approved and signed by the Chairman.

### **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The following accounts were passed for payment and the cheques signed :-

G. Crombie	120.10
Inland Revenue	109.83
Lacey Green Methodist Church	6.00
Speen Village Hall	300.00
Speen Playing Field	300.00
Speen Baptist Church	100.00
Bucks County Council	385.75
Robert Robertson	47.50
The Royal Label Factory	162.15

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING** - Confirmed as being Tuesday 16th June, 1998 - Speen Village Hall at 7-30 pm

### **OTHER MATTERS**

Speen Playing Field. Councillor Mrs Awdry mentioned that there was some concern over the management of the Playing Field. She believed that payments were being made to a member of the committee for work on the playing field. The Chairman said the Playing Field was a registered charity and as such the members of the committee were in fact acting as trustees and under the rules of charities no monetary advantage must be taken by persons in such a position. The Chairman also said this was



of concern to the Parish Council as they make an annual grant towards the management of the Playing Field.

Pond Cottage, Studridge Lane. Councillor Mrs Awdry also mentioned some concern over whether a wall at this cottage had been constructed without planning permission and if it had in fact been built on highway land. The Chairman replied that as the wall was less than two metres in height planning permission was not required and he very much doubted that it was built on highway land.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.22pm.

Chairman  
16th June, 1998

29 June 1998

Editor,

Regarding "Other Matters" in the Lacey Green Parish Council Minutes of the Annual Meeting dated Wednesday 13 May 1998, the Speen Playing Field Committee are now totally versed in the 1993 Charities Act, and the matter is now in hand.

Phyllis Harries - Secretary  
Speen Playing Field Association  
on behalf of The Committee

#### LACEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Dear Peter

Update on Parish Council Minutes on 13 May:-

Bottom of third page under heading "OTHER MATTERS" - Council has been informed by Playing Fields Committee that the query over payments for work on the field has been resolved and the work is being subject to competitive tender in full compliance with the requirements of its Charitable status. The Council have been assured that the Committee were not fully conversant with the Charity requirements at the time but this has subsequently been clarified.

PON



# THE PTA NEWS - In Glorious Black and White

*Latest function "probably the best ever."*

Many thanks to all of the villagers who supported the Black and Ball on 6th June. The event proved to be a huge success with some 170 people thoroughly enjoying a three course meal, live band plus disco and karaoke session.

Headmistress Mrs Nayna has attended many similar summer functions over her years' at the school and her assessment was "probably the best ever."

## ***Profit to be spent on new software to help with Maths***

The event produced a profit of over £1000, partly due to the generosity of various individuals and local firms who donated prizes for a particularly successful Raffle. Whilst some disturbance may be caused, these successful fund-raising events are essential to enable the PTA to provide money for buying computer equipment and sports facilities, to ensure that the school remains one of the best resourced in the locality.

The PTA committee have already taken the decision to use a substantial part of the proceeds to purchase some sophisticated software that will benefit all the children in the school with their mathematics. This will be used in conjunction with a brand new computer very generously donated to the school.

## ***New covered play area to be built***

Other developments due to take place shortly include the construction of a new covered play area at the back of the school. Thanks to the governors and trustees for putting this improvement through.

*Peter Symonds*





## OTHER SCHOOL NEWS...

...includes the changes in staff. Unfortunately, Mrs Bate is being made redundant due to the change in the age structure of the school. Also Mrs Elkin, who has been at the school for some 8 years, is making a career move and has accepted a job at another school. Mrs Bate, likewise, has found a post elsewhere. Mrs Zyuria is also leaving because the number of children with "Special Needs" has fallen and this has been her specialist area. Many thanks to all three for years of loyal service. A further teacher appointment should be made in the near future.

### Speen WI providing some of the best one-to-one help with reading

An ongoing vote of thanks also needs to be given to the team of ladies from WI who making a major contribution assisting children with their reading. This support by the team of 10 or 12 ladies enables far more "one-to-one" reading tuition than would be found in most schools.

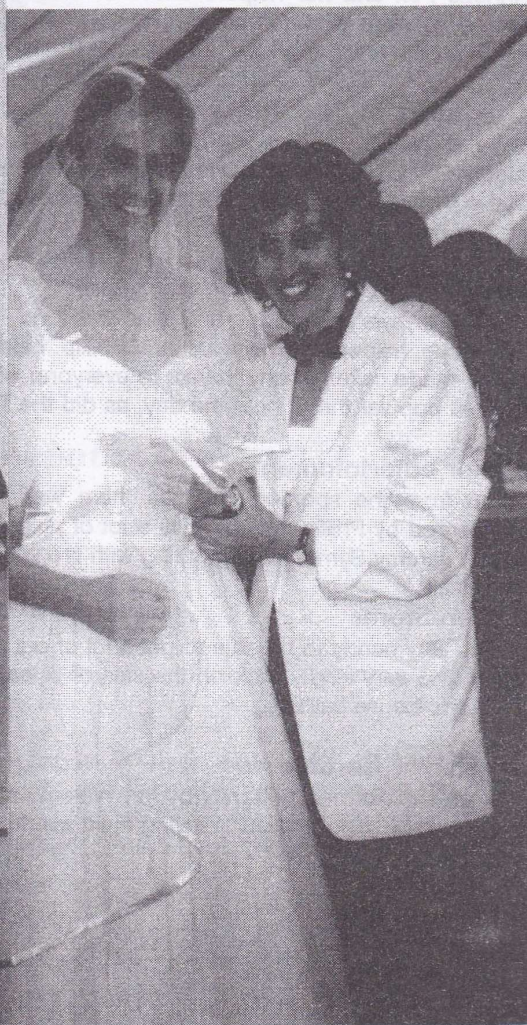
Finally our good wishes go to the many children leaving Speen school this term and to their parents who have supported the school over the recent years. The PTA intend to continue most of the out-of-school activities that we provide at present - including Music Club (which has been booked already), Chess Club and Saturday Sports Club. Hopefully, the parents of new children will get involved in supporting these activities at the earliest opportunity.

*Peter Symonds, Chairman*



*Those Karaoke  
"Guys"  
Peter and Corianne  
Symonds.*

*Those well-known  
"Cross-Dressers"  
Trevor and Christine  
Dunnington.*





*A window of fine weather and a great team made*

## **SPEEN PLAYING FIELD FAMILY FUN DAY**

*a top event in the village year*

After all the rain and indifferent weather we'd had lately, it was particularly good luck to have such perfect conditions on June 21st for what has become a popular village event.

### **Tennis**

The tennis players started at 8.30 and matches continued throughout the day, culminating in wins for Christopher and Andrew Wheeler (Senior/Junior), Ron Fleet and Sue Rogers (Mixed Doubles), Christine Oliver and Caroline Crossley (ladies Doubles), and Noel Dockstader and Simon Cleaver (Men's Doubles).

We have Amanda and Simon Cleaver to thank for organising this so well. It was by no means easy because frequent rain in the preceding weeks meant that very few matches could be played until the day itself.

### **Five-a-side Football**

As usual, David managed his various Five-a-side teams with great skill and patience! The winners in the 12+ section were "The Supremos", and the 8 - 11 winners were "The Gateway Gunners". Could we have some more teenagers volunteering next time? There was one team only entered for the 15+ age group, so sadly they had no-one to play against!

### **Other Team Games**

Annette Fox and her helpers excelled themselves in the games department, organising not just traditional team games, but new ones as well. The overall winners were "The Australians", followed by "The Lightening Seekers" and "The Tigers".

### **Colouring-in and Fancy Dress etc.**

Less strenuous activities were the children's colouring competitions and the Fancy Dress, both judged by Sandy Carter from the William 1V, and the Numbers Quiz, which kept people's brains active throughout the day. Sandy also presented the prizes and drew the Raffle. We're very grateful for her help and support.

### **Food, glorious food**

Central to everybody's survival was the food, and Keith Jones came up trumps again with the Barbecue, helped by Sheila, Jill and Phillip. Later in the afternoon we sold large amounts of tea and home-made cakes (many thanks to everyone who donated these), while ice-cream and cold drinks proved popular throughout the day, as did the Tuck Shop run by Speen School.

### **Other entertainments**

Apart from the sporting activities there was other entertainment on offer. The bouncy castle, sponsored by Phillip Green, gave a lot of pleasure, and for the first time ever we were privileged to watch Jeremy Symondson juggling with fire sticks! Maybe this could become a regular feature...?

### **Speen Stores**

It was very handy to be able to get a lot of our supplies through Sharon and David at Speen Stores. They also very kindly took on the sale of tickets, which saved the Committee from having to make house-to-house calls!!

### **Master of Ceremonies**

was performed brilliantly by Ian Waterman, keeping everyone up to date with events, and with his usual skill and humour. Playing Field events would certainly not be the same without him!

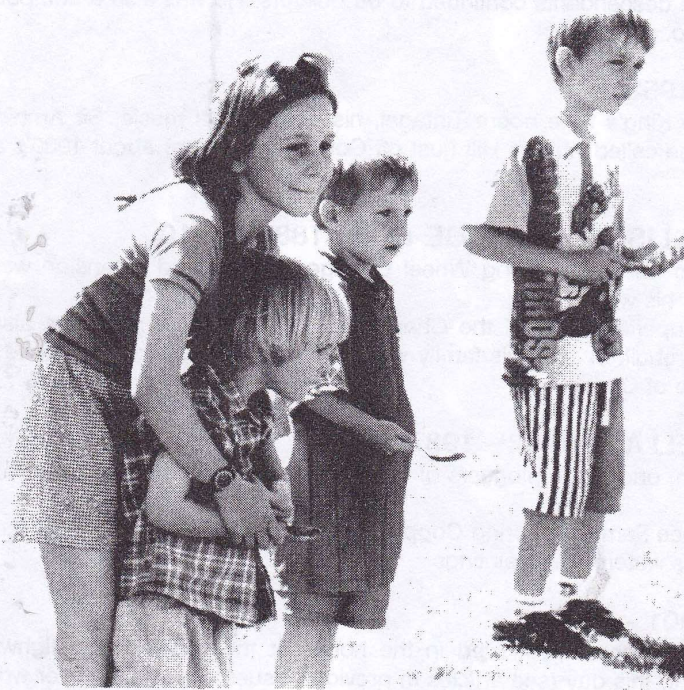


### Sponsors

We are grateful to our sponsors who placed adverts in our programme - which boosted our funds very usefully. They were: Speen Stores, The Hairworks, Capability Codling, Steve Newman, William 1V Restaurant, Phillip Gren, Pipers Corner, Tesco at Princes Risborough, Wycombe Mondeo Centre, The Chiltern Hospital, Frank Farr, and Woodside Secretarial Services.

All in all, the day was a huge success, and we must thank everyone who took part in whatever shape or form. Not only did we raise funds with which to maintain and enhance the Playing Field and its facilities, but a great many people of all ages had a wonderful day.

*Jenny Cowan*



***Tension mounts as Fun Day competitors await their "eggs"***

*Dear Editor,*

Really I want to address these remarks to those young men in Speen who think it's fun to trash a few things going home late at night, usually during the weekends.

One day even you will grow up and, believe me, you will look back and you will be a bit ashamed. The seat at the top of the hill, for example, was great for friends to sit and chat, walkers to rest etc. The pavilion clock added a bit of style to a modest structure. And as for trashing the playground equipment of small kids, don't you already feel a little ashamed at doing that? The list doesn't end here, but I don't wish to suggest too many targets to revisit.

This isn't a deprived inner city area with drab surroundings. We are privileged to live somewhere like this. Let's all take pride in the place whatever age we happen to be.

*Name and address supplied.*



**Bob Johnston** has come across some famous former residents whilst researching for the Speen Millenium project. If you have any additional local anecdotes or photographs which include them then please contact Bob on the subject.

#### **ISHBEL MACDONALD**

was, I suppose, really only famous for being the daughter of someone famous, namely Sir Ramsay MacDonald, who was the first Labour Prime Minister 1929-31.

She purchased Speen Farm and ran the Old Plow Inn. The house opposite the Plow (Ploughshares) was built for her housekeeper. Later in her life Ishbel married a local man, Norman Ridgley.

#### **CORNELIUS WARD 1815 - 1890?**

He was the local carpenter whose descendants continued to be builders. He was also a composer, having works published by Novello.

#### **SIR ARNOLD BAX 1883 - 1953**

The composer and Master of the King's tone poem Tintagel, his best known music, Sir Arnold is believed to have lived in the house called Abbots Hill (just off Coleheath Bottom) about 1930's and 1940's.

#### **WILLIAM PLUMRIDGE and LISA PLUMRIDGE about 1880 - 1910**

William had a chair making shop behind Spinning Wheel Cottage. The forward extension was a shop and Post Office run by Lisa, his wife.

William is known as long time superintendent of the Chapel (see plaque inside). He was also a musician. When the Chapel was rebuilt in 1804 his family was given Chapel Cottage (Opposite the houses called Sringfield at the top of Chapel Hill).

#### **SIR THOMAS HOLMES SELLARS 1902 - 1987**

He was a cardio thorasic surgeon, one of the pioneers of heart sugery and founder of the Harefield Hospital Heart Unit.

Sir Thomas lived in Spring Coppice Farm (off Spring Coppice Lane) about 1950 to 1977 and he left to the present owners some of his watercolour paintings.

#### **SIR EDMUND RUBBRA 1901 - 1986**

Pianist and composer of nine symphonies, he lived in the house at the very end of Highwood Bottom, where his family still live to this day (see articles in previous issues of the newsletter written by Ben Rubbra). Sir Edmund worked in a garden bungalow which housed his grand piano.

#### **RUMER GODDEN 1907 and still living in Scotland.**

She is an author with 70 books to her credit, many filmed and the best known of these probably being Black Narcissus (filmed 1946).

Rumer lived as a single parent with two children in a house then known as St Peter's Hill but since renamed The Old Cottage. This was around 1960.

On her second marriage she moved to White House Farm, Kiln Lane for "the Good Life" of self-sufficiency. However, farming did not appeal - "it's all petrol and killing" and so she moved again, this time to Whiteleaf.

#### **GEORGE RIDGLEY 1854 - 1955**

George was the oldest Postmaster, having done the job for fifty years. He also ran a bakery in The Old Post Office. When delivering books to Rumer Godden he left his basket in the road - "so t'cars know where oi be an wun't run over oi."

#### **PETER GOFFIN**



In the 1950's he lived at Turnip End. As an artist he designed costumes and sets for Gilbert and Sullivan's D'Oyly Carte operettas. (Bob would like more information on him, please)

**MISS DAWSON and JOYCE COLEMAN**, Bucks Lace maker and Spinner and Weaver respectively. These ladies lived opposite each other in Studridge Lane until just recently in The Old Bakehouse and Spinning Wheel Cottage. (Bob needs more information on these ladies please, in connection with a book on the history of Speen and I'm sure there are many who will oblige him. The editor's wife, Mary Dawson, was actually taught maths by Miss Dawson at Wycombe High School. What a coincidence when, upon our move to Speen in 1985, we began to get our mail deliveries mixed up and got to know her a little during visits to the Old Bakehouse to sort it out! Miss Dawson actually lived in the oven! Ed.)



PE-107 9 07% 00 12 08

*Pre School Class of '98*



***That irrepressible pair, Martin and Marjorie  
Stockley, experience "Le Twinning"***

We decided to go on the Twinning Association visit to Hambye in May in order, we thought, to meet people and brush up our French. We hadn't reckoned on the first Frenchman we met being a motor mechanic and the first addition to our French vocabulary being *joint de culasse* - head gasket!

We were the only representatives from Speen in the party, but were unable to join the coach contingent from Lacey Green on Saturday due to another commitment. So we drove down to Portsmouth early on Sunday morning to get the first ferry across to Cherbourg. Whilst in the queue waiting to board a nearby driver pointed out the tell-tale splashes of hot water on the tarmac. We took the car (a French one wouldn't you know) over on the ferry but it was obvious after driving a short distance in Cherbourg that we couldn't continue and that's where the mechanic and his unhappy diagnosis came in. Incidentally it is not easy raising help of that nature in France on a Sunday, neither is it easy to find a car hire firm that is open, so it was some time and a good many francs later before we got underway again in a hired car, having gently coaxed our Citroen back to the ferry terminus to await our return a couple of days later.

On reaching Hambye in the early evening we met our hosts, who were very friendly as twinning people usually are and with whom we were to stay; we also learned that in our absence the French had beaten us at darts (*incroyable*) and we were told that we were fortunate to have arrived in time for the karaoke. Hmmm.

The evening do was a splendid buffet supper, with wine, put on by the French Association in their community centre for their English visitors - (vegetarians would be advised to twin elsewhere). After a couple of short after-supper speeches and presentations - we gave them a dartboard which seemed to me somewhat ironic given the result of the match - there was the karaoke. Perhaps predictably your Speen correspondents provided the English input for this event (sad couple), and afterwards there was dancing. It was all good fun.

The next day we English and a number of our French hosts travelled by coach to Mont St. Michel. This is a famous tourist spot on the north coast of France, a towering castle built on a rock at the edge of the sea. There we walked, talked, laughed, viewed, marvelled, bought postcards, took photos, drank coffee and beer, picnicked on the sea-wall and generally did what all tourists do. But it is a place that should be visited and is both spectacular and rich in history.

The journey back to Hambye in the sunny afternoon was an eye-opener. We were lucky to have a driver who was quite happy to take us down the little lanes and through the dozing hamlets that are sprinkled across this part of the Cotentin peninsula. This was just as well as there appeared to be a certain amount of Anglo-French confusion as to the correct route. The countryside, however, was beautiful, the wild flowers in great abundance in the meadows and at the verge, small clear streams running through the rolling landscape, cows that looked every bit as sane as you or I, and the usual modest, timeless homes of the French small farming community. For those who have not yet been, a visit to Hambye and the area nearby is worthwhile for



this alone. Of course it does help if the sun is shining and you happen to be looking out over the scene from the height of a coach seat.

That evening the couple with whom we were staying cooked us a delicious dinner. The neighbours and their own guest from Lacey Green were also invited. There was much hilarity despite the language difficulties, probably correlated to the volume of wine consumed, although our Lacey Green colleague was impressively bi-lingual in any case.

We left next morning in our hired car having secreted in our luggage a bottle of locally (and plainly illicitly) distilled Calvados presented to us with much hushed whispering by our so kind hosts. This was clearly the real thing. On the way back to Cherbourg we found a superb restaurant on the far north of the peninsula, where lunch provided a gratifying prelude to the saga of getting back to Speen with an undriveable car. Suffice to say that, with somewhat stuttering assistance from the AA, we did arrive home eventually at about 2.30 am.

It was a great trip (the car would have clapped out sometime anyway). We recommend it and will go again. And it would be nice to see some more folk from Speen.



*Maypole Dancing - in the rain - in July!*  
*Fete '98*





## *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.***



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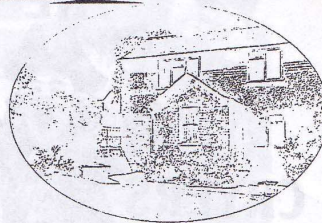


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Family Fun Day had the only good weather this summer!





# Body Facts

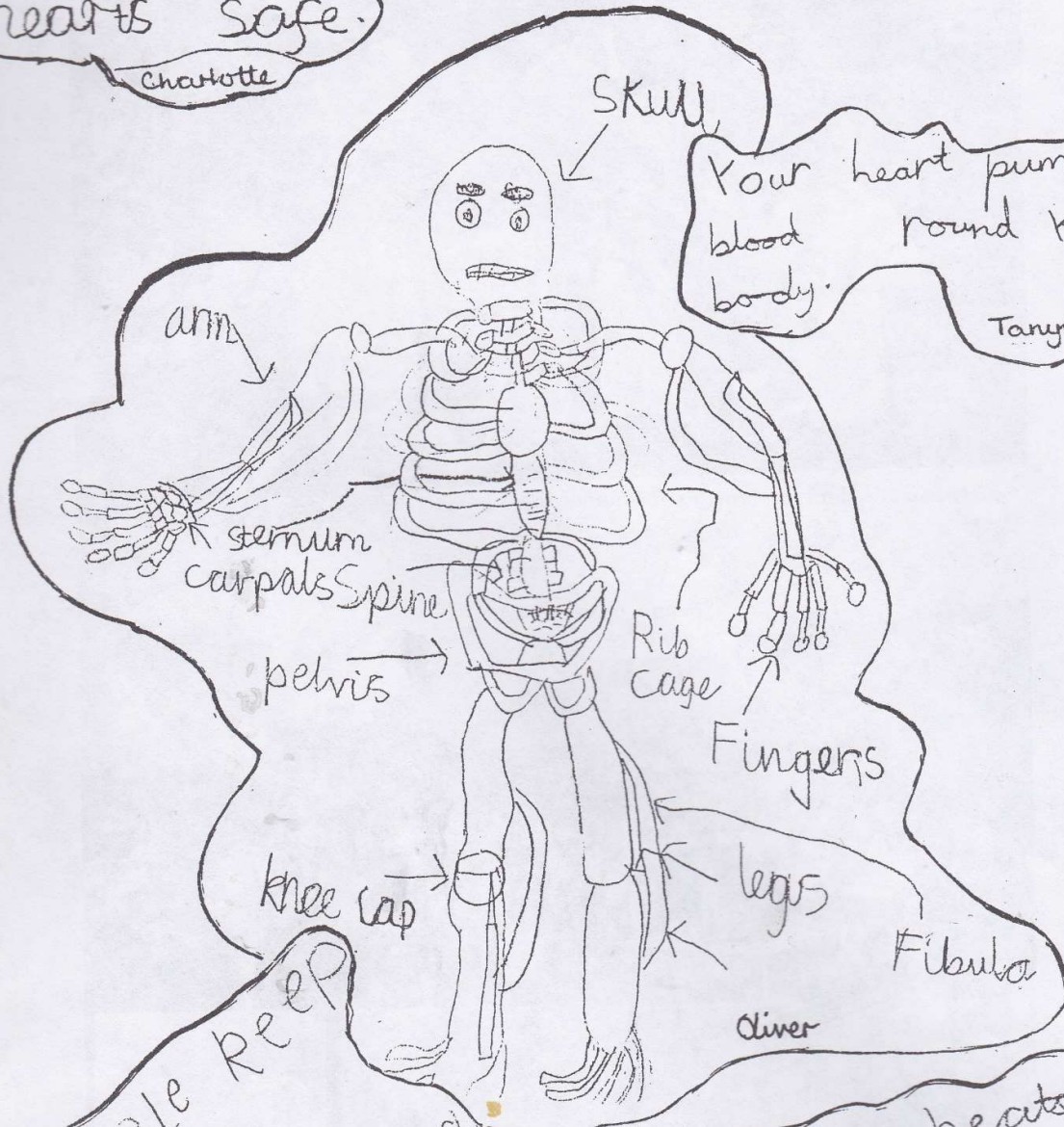
Y2 + Y3

Ribs keep our hearts safe.

Charlotte

Your heart pumps blood round your body.

Tanya



People keep fit by doing lots of running and sport.

Max

The heart beats at a steady beat.

chelsey

We have 206 bones in our body.

Jennifer



When you move your body the  
nerves send messages to your  
brain to tell the arm to move.

Alexandra

Your muscles make your  
legs and arms move.

Oliver

bad Sugary things are  
for your teeth.

Kyle

When you cut yourself  
blood comes out.

Rachel

Andrew

If you eat too  
much chocolate  
you will get rotten  
teeth.

If we didn't have  
joints walking with  
we would be  
straight legs.

Michael

The fist is the same size as your  
heart is the same size as your  
fist.

Damian

same

size

as

your

Your rib cage is to  
protect things inside it.

Richard





A face in the crowd awaiting the opening of the new shop - Miss Anne Selby, great champion of the cause, campaigner against unnecessary stiles and one of my severest critics. "Too influenced by the Sun", she said, by which I think she meant the "newspaper" of that ilk. Peter



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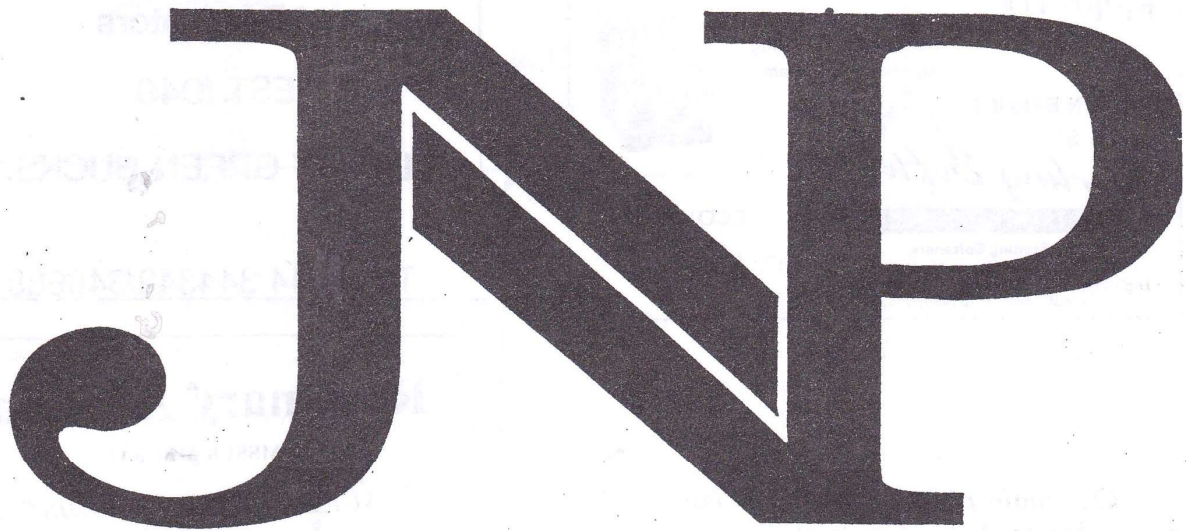
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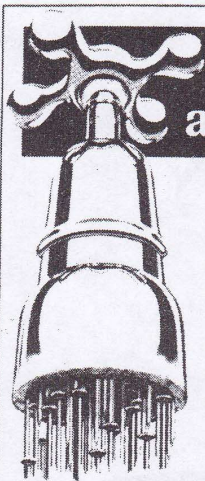
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*Our main photographer this issue  
is Martin Hart. Other photos were  
supplied by Bill Chinn, Peter Symonds,  
and Dawn Schollar. Thank you from Ed.*

## Rosemary A. Stone

(MSSCh MBChA)

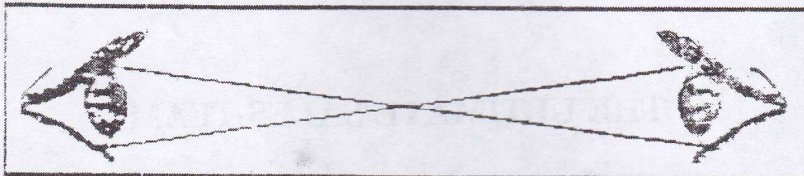
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Bryony 24.6.98 5yrs 6mths

My first year at school  
I like reading  
doing work writing  
news. I also like doing  
games.

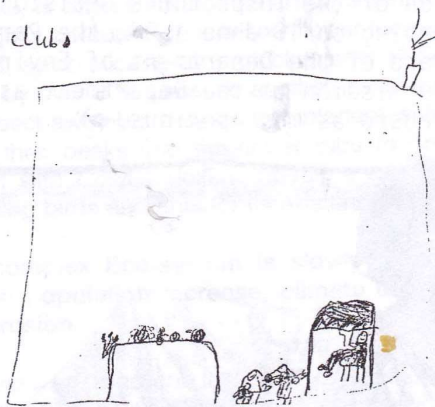


Laura 24.6.98

5yrs 5mths

my favourite

things at school are playing reading  
books writing doing work. I enjoy  
playing in the home corner, music  
clubs



Sue

24.6.98

4yrs 10mths

My first year at school.

I play in the home corner  
and I like drawing

a picture and writing.



Siobhan 24.6.98

5yrs 6mths

My first Year at School.

I like colouring at school  
and I like playing in the Home  
corner.

Thank you  
children -  
lovely work.



Noreen 24.6.98

5yrs 5mths

My first year at School

I like to play in the home corner

and I like drawing

and I like doing colouring

I like going outside

and I like doing work in school

and I like having lunch



Kristine

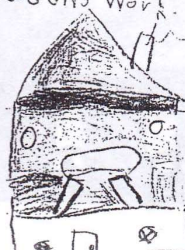
5yrs 6mths

My first year at school.

I like colouring and

reading and playing

and doing work.





## SPEEN PLANNING APPLICATIONS

98/05174	1 Cottage Farm Waye	Two Storey Extension
98/05328	Magpies, Grubbins Lane	Proposed Extension amended to Single Storey
98/05537	Wayside Cottage, Hampden Road	Lean-to Extension at back of Garage
98/05575	Driftway House, Coleheath Bottom	First Floor Balcony
98/05498	Rosebank Cottage, Chapel Hill	Amended Plan for New House already permitted
98/05556	Grubbins, Grubbins Lane	Conversion of Garage into Granny Anne
98/05817	Primrose Cottage, Flowers Bottom	Front Porch

The following applications have been approved:-

97/07104	Speen Caravan Site	Siting of one extra Caravan
98/05161	7 Abbottswood	Conservatory
98/05174	1 Cottage Farm Waye	Extension

The District Council Planning Committee approved the siting of one extra caravan on the Hillside Caravan Site in contravention of the Inspector's decision on Planning Appeals held in 1984 and 1991. At their meeting on 16 June 1998, the Parish Council were most concerned at this apparent disregard of the Department of Environment's decisions. The Parish Council has made a submission to the Department asking for their comments on this matter, which they regard as most serious.





**SPEEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** is building up a well deserved reputation for brilliant presentations. The one in June was superbly given by eminent botanist, Professor Sir Ghilleen Pranse of Kew Gardens. Kew are involved in a "seed bank" project of world wide significance. I understand that Andy Gower simply asked Sir Ghilleen - and he was delighted to come along.

Ed.

### **Ted Drew reports on the talk**

On Friday, 12th June, the Society were privileged to have Professor Sir Ghilleen Pranse, director of Kew Gardens to give an illustrated talk, "Seeds for the Millenium."

Sir Ghilleen told us that the Millenium Seed Bank project at Wakehurst Place, Sussex, part of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, would provide an **extinction safety net for at least ten percent of the world's seed-bearing plants**. It will also include samples from every U.K. species that produces storable seed, some 1440 species, making the U.K. the first country in the world to have such a conservation resource.

We were told that up to 25 per cent of the world's 250,000 or so species of flowering plants face the prospect of extinction within the next 50 years because of changes to their habitat caused by forest clearance, desertification, unsuitable farming practices, building and industrial development, climate changes and so on. The Seed Bank is not intended to replace conservation of plant habitats, but does provide a valuable safety net for many species, because seed can be germinated and grown after many years of safe storage. Sir Ghilleen then expanded on the technical aspects of how the seeds are collected and stored (*at low temperatures, I believe he said, Ed.*)

Sir Ghilleen then went on to explain why the Earth was facing ecological disaster. First he showed how the ecological chain worked, giving various examples. The genus *Costus*, for example, is often cultivated as an ornamental plant in tropical gardens. This is because of its mass of brightly coloured specialised flower-leaves (bracts). These bracts also secrete nectar and are tended, symbiotically, by protective ants. If *Costus* is grown where ants are excluded the seed set drops by over 80% because another insect lays its eggs in the ovules of the flowers. The ants drive this insect away but they do not interfere with the larger humming birds which visit the flowers and insert their beaks into the flower tube to drink the floral nectar and, at the same time, become dusted with *Costus* pollen. Therefore this beautiful ornamental plant can be said to depend on humming birds and ants for its existence.

The complex Eco-system is slowly being eroded and the main causes are identified as human population increase, climate change, the thinning of the ozone layer, pollution and soil erosion.

This was an excellent talk, well presented and thought-provoking. Sir Ghilleen introduced us to something of the wonders and excitement of nature.

Future dates for the Society are 1th July, Fete day (we need plants and home produce to sell), 19th July, Open Gardens (*this year excluding we who live at the fringes, since it seems our visitors, says Ted, will be too exhausted by having to walk down Chapel Hill or along Grubbins Lane - hmm! Ed*) and 25th July, Summer Show (schedules will be delivered soon).

*Footnote: May I point out that monthly copies of The Garden, published by the Royal Horticultural Society, are being held by me on behalf of the Horticultural Society. It is a splendid, beautifully illustrated magazine and members of the Society are encouraged to take copies out on loan. Just phone 488222 before calling at Chervil Meadow to collect a batch. Peter*

**Watch out for:**

**The Natural World Of Speen** - an updated slide show and talk by Peter Symonds, featuring some of the wildlife and natural colours in and around Coleheath Bottom. Details to be publicised later.



# NORTH DEAN REPORTING....

## Beetle Drive

Amazing! We have gone from strength to strength. If numbers continue to improve, we will have to turn folk away! - And once again it was a great fun evening with a splendid supper!

## Treasure Hunt

Eleven cars took part in this event. I'm sure Jez, who organised it, was more than pleased with the response. The cheese and wine provided at the end of the evening was super - as were Lillian's home-made pickles!

## Barbecue and Plant Sale

This popular Sunday lunchtime event was successful despite a rather cloudy day. And yet how does North Dean manage to get those sunny interludes at just the right times?!

Luckily, in the event of rain, we can always retire to the Village Hall. Many thanks to our gardening friends who supplied our plant stall with surplus stocks of very good plants indeed. About 70 people attended.

## Woodland Walk

A disappointing response, but the weather was poor.

Hopefully, the next time John Morris, a woodland expert, organises another of these walks, we can expect a better turn-out as this is a very interesting event.

## SOME FUTURE EVENTS:

### Saturday 18th July

Charity Pig Roast (with proceeds going to Cancer Research and M.S.) 7.30 until midnight.

Food to be served at 9pm. There will be a Bar, Live Music by "Trampoline". Tickets £6

Phone Roger on 562448 or John on 562041.

### Thursday 23rd July

"Summer Friends 1998" 10 am - 3.30 pm.

Playscheme for children aged 5 - 14 years Organised by Wycombe District Council.

Details from Stephanie Teblitt on 421886.

### Saturday 8th August

FETE starting 2pm, to include Children's Fancy Dress and New Photographs Competition. Two classes Adults is one and children under 14 the other.

Maximum size prints 7" x 5" black and white or colour. All entries welcome.

SOS - CAKES! CAKES! CAKES! and yet more CAKES for our FETE. Not to mention Jam and other fatteners goodies - collection organised.

Phone me *Megan*, on 563074





The month before I was demobbed from the RAF I was interviewed by the BBC for a job as a "Probationary Technical Operator".

What is that? It eventually proved to be a Video Cameraman. At the first interview I was questioned about sound reproduction, something I knew little about. I was advised to buy "Sound Reproduction" a book by G A Briggs, and familiarise myself with the subject. No mean feat. But I read it ready for my next interview. Two months later, having left the RAF and being on the dole I was called for a second interview. At this interview I was asked many technical questions, none of which related to the book I had just struggled through. These questions were about cameras, lenses, stop numbers, shutter speeds and last but not least film speeds. Fortunately, being an amateur photographer I managed to answer most of his questions. A month later a letter from the BBC offered me a job of probationary cameraman on Television Outside Broadcast - London. During the probationary period of two years I was to spend three months at the BBC school at Evesham. By 1960 I had successfully completed this time, and became an established cameraman.

My first major outside broadcast was the wedding of the Princess Margaret to Lord Snowdon at Westminster Abbey. My camera position in the Abbey was on the triforium. Close to my camera was a sound cabin from which Richard Dimbleby would make his commentary. During the many rehearsals that week involving stand-ins, clergy, choir, musicians etc. he referred to me as "Stan, Stan the Triforium man". I also enjoyed some brief personal fame that week when the Daily Sketch featured me in an article when I was described as the BBC's youngest camera man.

My next move was to a two camera unit called the Roving Eye which had its own built in power generator, and its own video and sound transmitter which transmitted to our own receiving vehicle. One of the race courses we visited was at Lincoln with a road along side a length of the race course, which we roved down following the horses. On a fine day these were enjoyable events for us. We always lunched at a country pub close by. In order that the whole team could lunch in time, we got the pub waitress to hold up the menu so that we could view it with our camera. The receiving van could then view the menu and make their orders known to the cameraman who would relay it to the waitress..... Our lunches were ready fifteen minutes later.

The first ever live mountain climb was covered from Snowdon by the BBC for Grandstand. The two climbers involved were Joe Brown and a frenchman. The roving-eye vehicle drove to the village of Llanberis at the foot of Snowdon, together with all the equipment and cable. All this was unloaded onto a Ffestiniog train tender and taken up the mountain, where it was transferred to a trailer and pulled by tractor to the top of the climb. The Roving Eye interior was rebuilt inside a garden shed at the top of the climb. A mobile generator was fixed outside the hut. A platform was built and fixed to the cliff side with wire hawsers and a camera was mounted on this platform to look down the climb. The second camera mounted in a another position elsewhere. All this was connected up and was working well, ready for the following day's rehearsal. After a good meal and a good night sleep we returned to the mountain site..... the shed had gone! The shed floor was still there along with the equipment, but the walls and roof had gone after bad weather overnight. We could just see the shed down the mountain.

Fortunately we had the assistance of two climbers who were able to retrieve the shed so that we could continue. Grandstand went on air next day. Joe Brown, our star climber, was rigged with a radio mic and radio talk-back so that he could hear instructions from Grandstand. Halfway up the climb Grandstand told Joe they were going over to the racing but would return to the climb in twenty minutes. Joe then decided that it was tea time and to our complete surprise rapidly came to the top for tea with the Beeb, returning twenty minutes later to finish the climb for the viewers!

Another event we were involved with was the televising of the Eurovision Song Contest. We were in Brighton for a week to rig all the cameras and equipment for the presenters from all the participating countries, plus a full three days of rehearsing. After the first rehearsals with Abba's "Waterloo" the whole camera crew agreed that they would be the winners. After our rehearsal finished we quickly made our way to the bookie shop. Didn't we do well at 7:1?

During my time with the BBC I have been involved in many State Events including official visits by foreign Heads of State, Royal Weddings, Opening of Parliament, HM The Queen's Christmas Broadcast from Buckingham Palace and one other I remember was the Investiture of the young Prince Charles at Caernarfon Castle which was staged and organised by Lord Snowdon who took time to talk with the camera men during rehearsals.

I worked for the BBC for thirty three years and enjoyed every moment of that time - it really was a job in a million watching the life of our nation as it unfolded before me.

*Stan Bale*



## NEW YEARS EVE 1999 WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Judging by the Latin evening at Beechdean, the opening of Speen Stores and the Speen School Ball, the villagers of Speen and North Dean like a gathering.

If you like the idea of a get together to see in the new millennium, we need to get organised as fast as possible!

Any ideas or plans already on the drawing board? Please contact me as soon as possible.

*Suzi Rose 488696*

## SPEEN PRE-SCHOOL

Summer term has been an exciting and busy time discovering baby animals. We have learned about 12 different baby animals, talking about their needs and their habits. We visited Odds Farm for our summer outing and over the weeks we have had many different animals visit the Pre-School, including a lamb, a kid, some chicks and a rabbit.

One memorable day was when we were kindly invited to visit Chester, no, not the town, but a beautiful chestnut foal owned by one of the villagers. The children were captivated and still talk of Chester and Charlie, no, not his dad, Charlie is his mummy. We will round up the term with our annual Sports Day, followed by lunch near the cricket pavilion.

End of term unfortunately means we must say goodbye some children heading off to "big school", and also to key people who have worked extremely hard for the Pre-School. Therefore, huge thanks go to Julie Blundell, who has been an outstanding Chairperson, and to Lesley Sutherland, a member of staff who is leaving to resume her midwifery profession.





## MISSION IMPROBABLE

### 1998 NORTH DEAN TREASURE HUNT

Under the cover of bright sunshine and blue sky ( yes really ! ), thirty or so villagers and friends made their way stealthily to the Village Hall on the evening of 16 May for a top secret briefing by Agent Jez, alias the "Ice Cream King". Their Mission - to find the answer to 18 devilish questions on the local area, to cover as few miles as possible in the task and to look totally baffled when meeting other treasure hunters in the right place at the wrong time. Oh, and to raise funds for the Hall's coffers.

The flag dropped and in the usual way of these things, some hared off into the distance in a haze of tyre smoke. Others ( who had probably been in the Scouts and Guides ) sat carefully contemplating questions, maps and dead reckoning bearings before heading off in the wrong direction. Most just set off, perhaps wishing they could just go to the pub for a couple of hours before coming back.

Jez counted us all out and - eventually - counted us all back as one nameless couple arrived more than half-an-hour later than everyone else with some feeble story about being lost in the woods, twice !

The answers were revealed over wine and an excellent salad. No-one spotted the old MG's at Bledlow but we all discovered that the new Speen Stores is " a useful little shop". The Dashwood family motto turns out to be "Pro Magna Charta" and there really are only three pubs in West Wycombe.

With excitement reaching fever pitch - the wine was running out - the results were announced in reverse order ( no reflection on the Morris Minor's transmission ) and for the second year running, the Howards were the winners ! Outrageous and unsporting observations that they are Jez's bosses were quickly shouted down ( by the Howard team ... ) and the rest of the evening was enjoyed by all, with a hope that the event will be repeated next year.

The results were :	1 <sup>st</sup>	Howard
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Equal	Lister / Pyle
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Equal	Simmonds / Cash
	4 <sup>th</sup> Equal	Chinn / Cliffe
	5 <sup>th</sup> Equal	Shaw / Lane
	6 <sup>th</sup>	McClaghry

### MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Many thanks from all who took part to all who organised it, particularly Jez.

393 words

Nick Cliffe.



## **36. Update on the Monkton Wood Footpath Issue**

**"ENQUIRY LIKELY" say council**

I spoke recently to Mrs Freeman of Bucks County Council and she advised me that a total of 25 objections have been received concerning the council's recognition that the footpath had become a bridlepath through successfully unopposed use as such for a period of many years.

The objections came not only from individuals but also from organisations which represent large numbers of people. Because of these objections it is almost certain that an enquiry will be carried out by the Ministry of the Environment; most likely at a hall near you. I understand that part of the proceedings will involve representatives from each side walking the footpath to look at any areas mentioned in correspondence. I believe that the public meeting will follow during which evidence will be presented and presumably challenged from both sides. Subsequently the person in charge of this procedure, representing the Ministry, will make a recommendation to the Minister as to whether the footpath should become a bridlepath. I believe it may take many months before this enquiry takes place. Meanwhile, said Mrs Freeman, all objectors will be kept fully informed. Importantly this should now include Lacey Green Parish Council who were left out of the original consultation because the footpath lies immediately on the Great Hampden side of the parish boundary - albeit that Speen residents are the nearest and, therefore, most frequent local users of the footpath.

Incidentally, I understand that one of the objectors also included an objection to use by some horse riders of the footpath leading from Coleheath Bottom up hill through the edge of College Wood and into Spring Coppice Lane. In response, I'm told that the Bucks Council "will take some measures" - though what and when one doesn't know. (Interesting place nowadays, College Wood, a whole grid pattern of forest paths having been opened up by log moving equipment.)

*Peter Dawson*

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## **WI belly dancers - the homeopathic alternative to Viagra**

**Barbara Collett reports**

We never did see the Art of Decorating Eggs Faberge Style as our speaker was unwell and couldn't come. However our President, Wendy White, is a dab hand at cake decorating and showed us the intricacies of making flowers from sugar paste - a job for those with lots of patience!

Our birthday party went down well with fine food and a belly dancer to tell us the history of belly dancing and who showed us the way to do

it. A few weeks later she came back to the Baptist Chapel Hall and a group of us were given the low-down on how to wiggle our hips, etc. It was quite exhausting and we really needed that glass of wine!

May was Resolutions Night and we also went on a Macmillan walk with husbands and dogs later in the month.

Mrs Reid, a lovely Scottish lady,

came in June to tell us about spinning and all the different types of wool there are. She had plenty of samples, knitted and unknitted, to show us.

Our speaker in July will be telling us how to trace our family tree, and in August Miss R.V. Easterbrook is to give a talk on "watercolour quickies", with Mrs W.M. Black showing slides and artefacts of "Unknown China" - the country, the is.



# SPEEN POST OFFICE in the VILLAGE HALL

## *End of an era*

The Post Office in the Village Hall closed for the last time at 1.45pm on 12th May 1998. The new Post Office in Speen Stores opened at 9am on 14th May for a full service, reports DON WHITE.

The Post Office had operated a Restricted Service in the Village Hall for a decade. Before then it had been sited in the old Speen Stores, opening full working hours.

At the beginning of March 1988, the then shopkeeper, Mrs Walsh, contacted the Parish Council to say that the Post Office would have to move from the shop and so was there somewhere else in the village for it. As a result of discussion with the P.O. District Manager, Mrs Moyse, the Parish Council Chairman offered the use of the Village Hall until an alternative could be found. An inspection followed that same day and approval was given for the move. The Post Office in the shop was then closed with

some haste and reopened in the Hall the very next Tuesday on a one-afternoon basis. That week the counter and the safe in the shop were removed.

Mrs Walsh continued to operate both the shop and the newly relocated Post Office from their respective premises for some months, but having to provide staff for both outlets proved cumbersome, especially as she also had a shop/Post Office in Aylesbury to run. So Mr Thaker took over the Restricted Speen service late in 1988 and did this successfully until it finally closed a few weeks ago.

afternoon and was staffed by Mrs Pratt, who was a retired Postmistress from South Heath. Mrs Pratt sadly died quite suddenly a few years ago and Mick Wood from Prestwood took over. The hours were reduced to one and a quarter per week as Mr Wood was staffing the Prestwood Office, almost single-handed, as well.

When the Post Office in the Hall finally closed, the regulars using it paid tribute to Mick for his services to the village with a signed leaving card and Garden Centre vouchers. The weekly Post Office had become quite a social event and many residents will miss it. Where else did you go into a Post Office and sit down to be served?!



Mick Wood serves his last customers at the Village Hall ...



...and then receives his leaving present from Don White.



## 'Chinnysnook' - North Dean

Bill and Megan Chinn have played an active roll in North Dean village life for nearly forty years and they have many stories to tell. Their move, however, did not happen overnight: it took nearly three years to build Chinnysbrook. The story was unfolded on Bill's 67th birthday in late June.

The Chinns met during the last two days of Megan's holiday in Porthcawl. Bill followed her to High Wycombe a month later and, as many young couples at the time, moved in with Megan's parents. Like all newly weds, finance was very tight but the urge to live independently drove them to seek a nook of their own. Alas, their search for a house was in vain until by pure accident, while driving in their Ford Popular around the villages, they noticed a 'For Sale' sign on a piece of land as they returned from Speen to High Wycombe. They both agreed it was a beautiful spot to live.

As a builder, Bill always had the ultimate ambition of building his own house, and was confident this was the way forward. Megan had to put her trust in Bill that his dreams could be converted into reality. So the land was purchased with savings and the planning began. "We started with little bits of paper" Megan explained, "and with the help of an architect we pieced together what we wanted and where everything should go". Planning permission for the building was only held up due to a piece of land at the front which is to this day is still dedicated to the council, although owned by the Chinns, in case of the need for road widening. The purchase of the land, design and obtaining permission took nine months during which time the area had to be cleared of a few large trees and scrubland. "At the time, there was building going on all over the place" Bill told me "So there was a waiting time of six months for bricks. We were all ready to go but

couldn't start because of the lack of materials. Just as I was telling one man entering the office. It was like a miracle. He was an agent for a materials firm in Watford. I said to him 'If you can supply me bricks today, you can have the order for the whole lot!' and bricks started to arrive very soon after!"

Bill was working full-time as a builder for Albert Brown and Megan for Toms the bedding suppliers. So the building took place at weekends. There was an occasion when Bill was working and Megan was at the site when four lorry loads of bricks arrived. "There was no pallets in those days, bricks were unloaded by hand. My back's not been the same since!" Megan grinned.

The building started in November and Megan remembers wearing Bill's pyjamas under her cloths because it was so cold! How did the villagers react to them? "We were probably the first 'outsiders' to come into the village but everyone was tremendous, offering us support and showing great interest, particularly Mr and Mrs Rogers opposite who fuelled us with hot tea from the very first day". Bill certainly proved that he knew his trade: brick by brick the foundation were laid with great care, and 3-4 months later the damp course was ready for council inspection. Then the shell and internal walls were built up to "plate" height. This stage took until the following August. "We used reinforced concrete, so I had to cast one large lintel on site along the back of the house because it would have been too heavy to lift" Meanwhile Megan continued to hoist bricks and eventually tiles in a wooden hod. Bill watched in horror once as she missed her footing and slipped. Fortunately only one storey high, she did not fall far - into a pile of sand.

The usual August fortnight holiday came round just in time to work on

the roof but the rains fell the entire time. Mr Rogers, a carpenter by trade, set the roof but the battening and tiling had to wait until the house dried out. The roof had to be completed in stages. By this time, Bill had become unwell: doing a physical day job and more physical work at weekends became too much for him. The delay cost them another year before the house was ready for plastering, painting and decorating. They had assistance from Megan's brother Trevor with the electrical system and a colleague of Bill's helped with the plumbing. They even built their own drains and septic tank which future houses used until the main sewers were put in.

The bills for the materials were paid monthly. "We didn't want debts, everything had to be paid for as we went along" Megan said. "The only mortgage we took out was for flooring, but I would never do that again. We moved in with one single bed and worked from there. It did take a while to make it a home and we have changed things over the years. We've only just gone from a solid fuel heating system to oil-fired during the last year".

It took the Chinns about 5-6 years to make the house a home but the garden, beautifully terraced up to the woods, took nearly twenty years!"

They are very happy in North Dean. Over the years they have enjoyed the love, friendship and sense of community spirit which they hope is conveyed to all the families who have moved there.

The verdict on building your own house? "It was a lot of hard work but it was great fun too. We're so lucky to live in such a beautiful spot"

It certainly is a welcoming home: plants and flowers everywhere, even an invitation to Bill's birthday lunch!

*Suzi Rose*



## GUIDES ON THE INCREASE

Hughenden Valley Guides continue to meet at the Scout HQ in Coleheath Bottom on Thursdays during term time. At the moment we have 20 members in the age range 10 to 14 years. With an influx of new members this year have concentrated on basic Guiding skills but have also found time for outings to Jardines in Aylesbury for bowling and to the Wycombe Scout and Guide Gang Show. Fifteen Guides and Four leaders enjoyed good weather and beautiful surroundings for our annual camp at Cliveden over the May bank holiday weekend. The camp site is in the heart of the National Trust Estate and was visited by a collection of wildlife while we were there, rabbits, foxes, deer took little notice of our presents and some were also lucky enough to see badgers in a set close to our field. The highlight to our camp was a boat trip on the Thames from Windsor.

The Guides will be running the children's games at Speen Fete this year as usual. We hope to end this term with the presentation of the Baden Powell Trefoil, the highest award in the Guide Section to Melanie Holmes and Laura Capell.

Pauline Hall

*I understood from Pauline that the Naphill Venture Scouts are going to meet at the Coleheath Bottom HQ (Hulton Lodge)--Good to see it being used more Ed*

## YOUNGER PEOPLE NOW WELCOME AT THE YOUTH CLUB

The Youth Club is still going. We have a small but keen group at the moment and we are meeting on alternative Wednesday's at 8pm - as usual in the Methodist Chapel Hall.

We have been out on several outings - Bowling to Aylesbury, Ice Skating in Slough (my knee has still not recovered!) and a visit to Beaconsfield Fair - not to be recommended without ear plugs! We are hoping that numbers will increase - especially in September when we will be lowering the age of entry into the club along with the secondary schools (i.e. 11+ not 12+) So do come along - remember Wednesday evenings 8pm. Please ring me anytime.

*Rob Lenko 488 337*



## ERIC GILL AT PIGOTTS

Many people have heard of Eric Gill but are not at all sure why he is noteworthy or what he did, and whether he has any importance to us today.

I was spurred on to write an article about him as I knew very little and a passing comment on the radio made me anxious to find out more.

The comment heard was that the new BBC logo on the television used Gill 'sans' typeface. How appropriate, in fact I was surprised that they hadn't used it before because of the strong connection between the BBC and Gill.

He was commissioned to carve statues on the front of the BBC building in Portland Place. He carved Prospero and Ariel from the "Tempest" and he did a lot of the carving at Pigotts in the 1930's. When he went to install the works he caused a problem. Gill liked to work in a stonemason's smock and woollen stockings, never trousers, and it became necessary to put a cover on the scaffolding Gill was using in order not to embarrass the public while he worked.

Eric Gill came to live at Pigotts in 1928 and he stayed until his death in 1940. He was the son of a minister and in later life he shared rooms with a calligrapher called Johnston which it is believed encouraged his interest in lettering. Eric Gill designed his first type script in 1907. At that point he was a stone mason. He was said to have a methodical approach and modest charges.

His first stone carving of the human form was in 1910 and this is the area where he is most well known today. His first significant commission was for the Stations of the Cross for Westminster Cathedral which he began in 1912.

converted to Roman Catholicism.

He first perfected the Gill 'sans' typeface for monotype in Capitals in 1927 and lower case in 1928.

Gill was commissioned to design and paint the name plate for the Flying Scotsman in 1932, and this became the standard for the London and North Eastern Railway.

Gill also carved a sculpture for the League of Nations Building in Geneva while living at Pigotts.

Pigotts was the last in a succession of Catholic Art and Craft communities set up by Gill.

The Pigotts community also included priests. The first was Father Bernard who was said to be neurotic, next was Father Elligotts who had affairs, and the last was Father Flood who was an inebriate. With these three it is not so surprising that Pigotts was described as becoming absurd with madness like Cold Comfort Farm.

Gill's extended family lived at Pigotts, as well as other crafts men and women, and they had to employ a teacher for all the children and grandchildren.

At the beginning of the war in 1939 Gill refused to wear a gas mask as the regulations stipulated, so he carried an empty gas mask box. He was starting to be ill at this time with constant colds, German measles and lung congestion. He commented about the war that he hoped that a bomb would land on Selfridges, as it was a symbol of the civilisation he detested, rather like Belshazzar and Gough.

In October 1940 he had an X-ray of his lungs and he was told he had lung cancer. Eric Gill would not have an operation because he believed it

was such a bodily mutilation that it seemed impious and he preferred to die.

A nephew was working in Gill's workshop at the time and he was left a job list to work on. Gill cleared up the workshop and went to Harefield, he told the surgeon he would be quite glad to die. He had a small operation but died on 17th November 1940, his wife Mary was with him. His body was brought back to Pigotts and laid out in the chapel in it's coffin. Gill had a great fear of being buried alive and so his brother severed an artery in the arm. Eric Gill's funeral took place on 21st November at Pigotts. The coffin was taken on a cart down the hill on the same type of journey as William Morris. Some of the people attending were grand children of Morris and Gill. Eric Gill was buried in the cemetery of the Baptist Chapel in Speen.

Eric Gill left instructions that his stone should be carved by Laurie Cribb and that there should be space left for his wife's inscription. Eric Gill left 100 figures or reliefs in stone, 750 pieces of inscriptional lettering, 6 type faces, 1,000 engravings and 300 pamphlets, articles and books.

One of the carvings was over the door of the Village Hall. Was the new porch put over the top, or was the carving removed?

The 97 year old Philip Haggren, one of Eric Gill's early companions said of him "Eric Gill was not a star or a planet, he was a comet. A comet has a tail". If you want to know more, even if it is about the tail you will have to do your own research.

I retrieved some of the information from the book "ERIC GILL" by Fiona MacCarthy.

Glenn Hart



# RED KITES OVER SPEEN

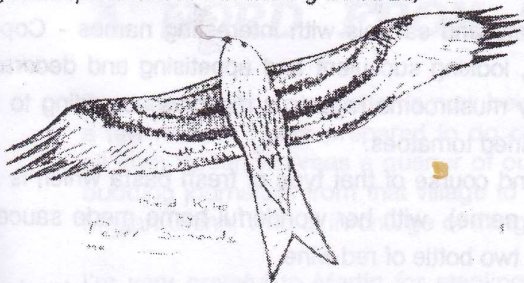
In 1989 a scheme was started to re-introduce Red Kites into parts of the country where they have not been seen for most of this century. Prior to this re-introduction, Red Kites were largely restricted to a strong nucleus in the hills of Mid-Wales. Whilst this relict population had recovered well from the days when persecution threatened their extinction from the British Isles, they were not recolonising areas where they were found up to the 19th century.

Since 1989 the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have released, in this country, 269 Red Kites taken as youngsters from previous strongholds (mainly in Spain and Sweden). They were released in Southern England, Scotland and, more recently, the English Midlands. One of the original release sites was farther down the Chilterns in Oxfordshire, just over the boundary with Bucks. Breeding successes have been recorded since 1992, with over 80 young being reared in 1997 by the new English and Scottish populations. The Oxfordshire population has fared well and it is relatively easy to watch Red Kites by simply travelling some 5 to 10 miles to areas like Bledlow, Radnage, Ibstone and Watlington. Indeed there are locations around Ibstone where 20 to 30 have been recorded in hard weather feeding on meat scraps provided for them. Indeed I have even watched Red Kites from the terraces of Wycombe Wanderers football ground at Sands High Wycombe and, in the week before writing this report, soaring above gardens in the middle of Watlington.

Inevitably, with these nearby concentrations, the Kites were bound to be seen over Speen before long. Roger Hussey had reported seeing one over Monkton Wood last year and I was pleased record a sighting on 4th February on the Western side of the village. At the recent slide show in the village hall other people reported seeing them over Speen and also over Great Hampden. These large and imposing birds are readily identified by their forked tails. Hopefully these sightings will increase and then we may be lucky enough to have a pair breed in the vicinity.

## *Peter Symonds*

*(That's exciting news that they are flying here. I haven't personally seen any over Speen, yet, but Mary and I were lucky to spot a pair at their nest site in the hills above Hambleden. They were nesting in an isolated copse of oak and pine in the middle of a field. One of the pair was sitting right at the top of the tallest tree on a dead branch, its silhouette, with wings hung out as if to dry, reminding me of the eagle emblem one used to see on Nazi German insignia - before Pete's time. This was in pheasant shooting country and not long afterwards we heard that dead Kites were being found in the area having evidently picked up poisoned meat left out for foxes. This is a vulnerable species - but luckily, for Kites and other predators, the gamekeeper is himself a diminishing animal Ed)*



## INTER VILLAGE GOLF - North Dean struggle to find players.

Golfers from N. Dean and Speen enjoyed another successful day out, at Western Turville Golf Club on 26th May. The weather was kind, and after coffee, twenty enthusiasts teed off for a twelve hole Texas Scramble, which was won by a mixed team from the two villages, Geoff Morris, David Black, Roger Shaw and Peter Brownridge.

A well-earned pint and a light lunch were taken before the main battle commenced. Due to a shortage of players from N. Dean the Trophy was not played for, but the individual competition was keenly contested, and was won once again by Ivor Beeks, the runner-up being Mark Wengler.

Despite some long drives by the more senior players, it was left to our two youngest members to hit the ball the straightest and win the longest drive prize; James Newman winning by a whisker. A good shot by Peter Brownridge won the nearest-the-pin prize, being one of the few balls to actually finish on the green!

The next match is being arranged for Sept/Oct at Princes Risborough Golf Club, date to be advised. Will all players interested please contact myself on 562041 or Dave Evans on 488495.

The trophy will be played for this, so come on North Dean, we want to put up a show - our turn to win!

The accepted format is a Texas Scramble in the morning, with the main competition in the afternoon. If you wish to change this, let one of us know and we will consider your suggestions.

*John Rogers and David Evans*



## Mountain and Mules of Morocco

I have just returned with a group of 35 people, including 7 visually impaired, having completed a challenging charity trek through the High Atlas Mountains. The six days on the trek were long and hard, averaging about eight to ten hours a day, trekking over demanding terrain and reaching a height of about 3500 metres. Some of the ascents and descents were steep and rough and all nights on the trek were under canvas. The scenery was breath taking - high mountain peaks, narrow twisting gorges cut by fast flowing rivers and banked by exotic pink flowering shrubs. Picturesque villages beside river banks of fig and walnut trees in lush valleys. It seemed that time had stood still and life had continued unchanged for centuries. Corn was being harvested by happy singing workers with sickles, and mules were harnessed together to tread the grain round the threshing post.

It was a great privilege to share the courage and determination of our visually impaired friends. An amazing journey which inevitably has changed our life, and helped change the lives of others, as well as raising a considerable amount for an excellent charity.

I would like to thank everyone for their generous support and encouragement, enabling me to raise more than £3500 sponsorship for Guide Dogs for the Blind. It was certainly a charity trek with a difference and an unforgettable journey through magnificent Moroccan mountains.

Any other donations would be most welcome.

Gloria Holmes (488420)

## A Speen Stores Special !!

The telephone rang at seven that evening - "Have you eaten yet?" asked John Holmes "as two of our four guests who are coming to dinner are ill, would you step in at this late stage?"

So we did - being curious as well as hungry - as the whole meal was being supplied AND prepared by Sharon of SPEEN STORES.

Firstly a platter of antipasto - thinly sliced Italian meats and salamis with interesting names - Coppa, Napoli, Felino and Palma Ham, beautifully presented, looking succulent and appetising and decorated with palm hearts, green olives, red peppers and baby mushrooms (*agaricus discopus* according to the label on the jar in which this mélange came) and sun dried tomatoes.

Sharon had been very imaginative by creating a second course of that type of fresh pasta which is not only fluted but twisted (I regret I do not recollect its name) with her wonderful home made sauce of tomato, anchovy and olives, further complimented with two bottles of red wine.

Finally an almond cake that floated off the plate served with a hunk of ice cream (two helpings) and coffee.

Verdict from fellow guests and John and Gloria was that we have a unique facility in the village that not only is able to supply our day to day requirements, but can also produce, with sufficient notice, a complete supper when required.

Perhaps we can see more villages sharing this delicious experience in future with no 'drink & drive' problems.

Roy Seager



## *Useful Numbers:*

43.

SPEEN SCHOOL 488321  
PTA (Pete Symonds) 488016  
PRE SCHOOL (Cherry Seekins) 488355  
MOTHER/TODDLER (Chris Dunnington) 488203  
LACEY GREEN PARISH:  
CLERK (George Crombie) 488240  
CHAIR (Don White) 488347  
COUNCILLOR (Jude Awdrey) 488607  
DISTRICT COUNCILLOR (Jean Gabbitas) 01844 346469  
NORTH DEAN COUNCILLOR:  
John Rogers 562041  
NORTH DEAN HALL BOOKINGS (Megan Chinn) 563074  
SPEEN HALL BOOKINGS (Kath Butler) 488412  
BAPTIST CHURCH (Pastor Andy Gower) 488758  
Neighborhood Watch Jackie Newman) 488474  
PLAYING FIELD CHAIRMAN (Keith Jones) 0831 588311 (mobile)  
TENNIS (Cherry Seekins) 488355)  
W.I. SECRETARY (Barbara Collett) 488348  
REFUSE COLLECTION (Thursday, Speen) 421415  
MILKMAN (Wren Davies) 862224  
MOBILE LIBRARY (Hampden Rd 10.15 -10.30 alternate Mondays  
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION/FETE (Paul Rogerson) 488315  
SPEEN AND NORTH DEAN NEWS EDITOR/FETE SEC (Peter Dawson) 488222  
GUIDES (Pauline Hall) 488372  
HORT. SOCY. (Ted Drew) 488738

SPEEN AND NORTH DEAN GOOD NEIGHBOURS (If you know of anyone needing help within the two villages then)

Either of:

Margaret Jones 488246  
Poppy Ellis 488548 or  
Doris Wilson 488334

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## **A WORD FROM THE EDITOR**

Production of the newsletter is now being shared between myself and Martin Hart and we now have a few more villagers prepared to do reports and interviews and submit articles. However, they are all from Speen whereas a quarter of our readers live in North Dean - so we badly need one or two budding journalists from that village to join our team. If you are interested, please have a word with Megan Chinn, who is in charge of things down there.

I'm very grateful to Martin for stapling up and delivering the spring issue while Mary and I were away on holiday. And thanks also to Martin for his enthusiastic approach to issue 14. Thanks also to our new copier lady at P.R. School, Anita Youkee, for diving straight in at the deep end and for discovering that her copier has a photo friendly mode. Hopefully we will now be able to use ordinary prints more often, using screened ones only when the originals are too dark. Philip Suter has done these screened prints for us for a long time now at no cost to ourselves, and we are very grateful.

Finally, thanks to all other writers to the "village rag" especially those who have sent stuff in on a regular basis. You know who you are and we wouldn't have come this far without you.

Okay, let's say 1st October as the target date for getting in all the stuff for issue 15, but if you have something in mind don't wait until then - get your material, in any shape or form, to me PETER DAWSON at Chervil Meadow, Chapel Hill (just above the Baptist Church but on the opposite side) or phone me on 488222.

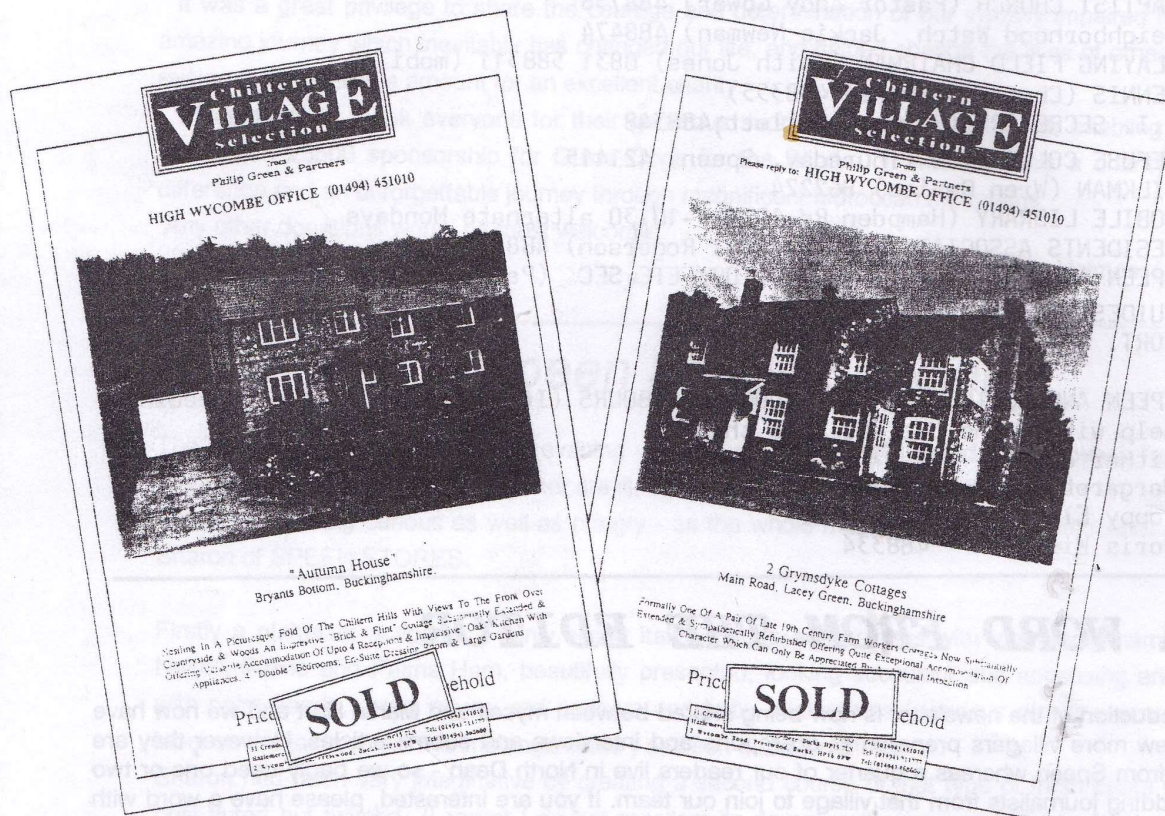
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Philip

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