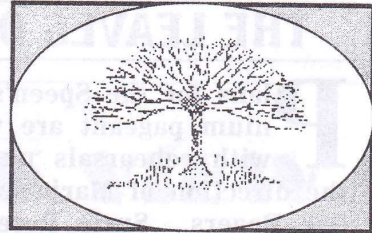


Speen & North Dean

NEWS



June 1999

Summer Issue No: 18

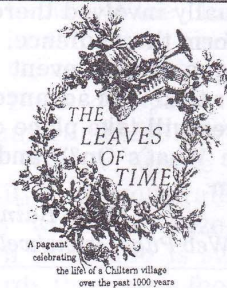
A SUMMER OF **CELEBRATION!**



Costumes depicting how people have changed in dress over some of the period of 1000 years.

THE LEAVES OF TIME

A pageant
celebrating the life
of a Chiltern village
over the past 1000
years



From Conqueror to Commuter.

A thousand years of history, from the Norman Conquest to the twentieth century! Seen or imagined through the eyes and ears of a small village in the Chiltern beechwoods.

By means of a series of short scenes we are led by The Wizard, from the arrival of the invading Norman army at Risborough only a few miles from Speen, through the civil war to the rise of the great chair making industry in the nineteenth century and on to the present day.

SPEEN VILLAGE FETE

2:00pm, SATURDAY 10th JULY 1999

at

Speen Playing Fields

Opened by: A Mystery Guest?

NORTH DEAN VILLAGE FETE

2:00pm, SATURDAY 7th August 1999

at

North Dean Village Hall Playing Field

Opened by: Mr David Morgan

THE LEAVES OF TIME

Plans for the Speen's own Millennium pageant are well in hand, with rehearsals underway under the direction of Marjorie Stockley and Sue Rogers. Suzie Rose is leading a hard-working team to create the costumes for the large cast, and John Holmes has got together a group of helpers to ensure the logistical side of the event is well organised.

In all about 100 people are now involved in performance, costumes, organisation, publicity or music – and there cannot be many village activities in recent years that have generated such wide participation. So the project is already succeeding in its first objective, which was to create a genuine community event. Publicity material is being widely distributed and the event is logged into the District Council's published programme of events.

BBC 3 Counties Radio have carried out an interview about "The Leaves of Time", and there is even a web-site that internet browsers can visit! Despite the number of villagers actually involved there are still plenty more to form the audience, so please support this unique village event and ensure you book your tickets in advance. The public performances will take place on 8th, 9th and 10th July (see What's On?), and tickets are available from:

Jean Baines on 488637.

Web Page: www/welcome.to/speen.bucks

SING A SONG OF BUCKS, A POCKETFUL OF RHYMES...

Most people stare blankly or snigger with embarrassment if you mention songs of Buckinghamshire, and might also be a bit pushed to come up with a well-known poet or two from these parts. But there is a rich and entertaining variety of material just waiting to be tapped into, as was proved in the Village Hall in April when Speen Millennium Celebrations put on an evening of Bucks songs and verse to another full house of around 70 people. The Speen Millennium Choir gave its maiden public performance with, among other things, extracts from The Prodigal Son by Speen's very own celebrated 19th century composer, Cornelius Ward. Martin Stockley sang some old Bucks country songs, including Jim the Carter Lad and The Wycombe Caning Girl.

Valerie Brookhouse, Stuart King, Brian Panter and Marjorie Stockley read poetry by the famous (Milton, Cowper, Brooke, Gray etc.) and the less well known, all with a Bucks



connection. A particular treat was Stuart King's reading of his own work, and for the second time in the space of a couple of months he had a Speen audience in the palm of his hand (see report in this issue on A Bodger's Eye View). A complimentary glass of Bucks Fizz was provided to audience members at the interval by way of another Bucks connection! If the audience comments were anything to go by, the high turn-out was fully justified as people seem to have had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. There has even been a request for a repeat performance....

Martin Stockley

Millennium Celebrations

"The Leaves of Time" on Speen Playing Field
8th July – 8.00pm

"The Leaves of Time" on Speen Playing Field
9th July – 8.00pm

"The Leaves of Time" on Speen Playing Field
10th July – 8.00pm

Tickets: £6.00. Concessions: £4.00



We are looking for donations of prizes for both the North Dean and Speen Fetes on the Tombola & White Elephant stalls. Every prize donated, instead of purchased, provides extra funds on the day!

Collection dates:

Speen - Chapel Hall, 1st July.

North Dean - Collectors will call 5th & 6th August.

▲ BODGER'S EYE VIEW

The bodgers hold a peculiar fascination for those of us who live in the Chilterns. The lives of these hardy craftsmen are at once so remote from the relative affluence and comfort of most present day residents, and yet so close, in that the last of them were still working in the woods around us well within living memory and there are still close family ties with many local people.

Small wonder then, that Speen Village Hall was full to overflowing when Stuart King presented an absorbing picture of the Bodgers and chair makers of the area, with the aid of slides, videos and a knowledgeable and entertaining commentary. So popular

was the event that the organisers, Speen Millennium Celebrations, were obliged to turn non-ticket holders away at the door, even though some had driven over from Aylesbury.

Mr. King took us through the complete

Windsor chair-making process from the felling and logging of the timber, the chopping of the billets, turning the legs and stretchers on the bodger's traditional pole-lathe, adzing the seats or bottoms and bowing the backs, to assembling and polishing the finished article. All this, and more, was illustrated by authentic photographs of the men, and occasionally women, who earned their livelihoods in the great Wycombe chair industry.

We saw and learned about some of the characters in the trade such as Jack Goodchild of Naphill, Bill Dean of Speen, and the unfortunate Billy "No-toes" Neville, whose propensity to demonstrate his skills with the adze (in which the blade is swung towards the user's feet) in the local pubs apparently led to rather more being shaved off than was intended.

Mr. King also brought along a collection of tools from the chair-making industry of the past which the audience were able to examine during the refreshment interval, and a number of beautifully crafted miniature Windsor chairs that he had made. If you missed it, I can recommend going along when Stuart King is speaking again if you get the chance.

Martin Stockley

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NEWS

The friendly and informative newsletter that goes into all homes in both villages, plus local Parish Councils and Businesses.

For information and details contact:

Martin Hart – Treasurer
Tel: 01 494 488528



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Your Letters

Not So Useful?

Dear Editor.

So, the "useful little shop" closed right through the Easter break from Friday lunchtime until Tuesday morning.

No wonder busy people like me continue to use supermarkets and, when necessary, rely on the *really* useful little shops in Walters Ash, where you can be sure the Post Office will be open every day.

Jo Banks.

Spennymoor.

The Down-Under Nomads!

Dear Editor,

Approximately two years ago I sat in my neighbours' kitchen, with a removal van outside, and penned a letter to this magazine to say how sorry I was to be departing from Speen. Well, here I am again; not in my neighbours' kitchen exactly but on another jaunt to sunny climes. Chris, the children and I moved to Speen in May 1996, had to go to Spain for 13 months, and only managed to hang on to village life second time round for 10 months. Much as we loved life in Speen Chris's work has drawn us to Melbourne, Australia.

The loaded question everybody has asked is how long we will be away for this time but we have very little control over our movements and even less idea how long the Aussie company wants Chris in Melbourne for. We were not being evasive- honest! We just didn't/ don't know.

When we first moved to Speen we intended to put down roots as during the course of our married life, we have lived in four English counties, five countries and fourteen homes moving sixteen times in the process. Later this year we will have to move again to somewhere more permanent. All these

details are irrelevant, really, except to demonstrate that we have lived in a great variety of environments and have many experiences to compare with that of living in Speen. Despite being excited about the prospect of spending a considerable time in Oz we were sad to leave and sincerely hope that we can return and settle in the village as we originally hoped.

I seem to have said rather a lot without getting to the point. Good-bye to our friends and many acquaintances in the village. We hope to re-aquaint with you in the not too distant future.

Should anyone happen to be 'down- under' our contact address is c/o Nufarm Ltd, 103-105 Pipe Road, Laverton North, Victoria 3026, Australia.

Finally, Chris and I would like to extend a hearty thank-you to Mrs Nayna and her team at Speen First School. Ashleigh was very settled and happy there and she advanced in leaps and bounds. Till we meet again.

Caroline, Chris, Ashleigh and Rhian Streeter-Jones.

A Question Of Good Reproduction?

Dear Editor

I read with interest the letter from a local resident whose name was not printed below regarding the magazine since you have taken over.

I agree that there is an all round improvement, but I think Peter did an excellent job for a long time, taking on the job at a moments notice and building up our local magazine to the excellent publication that it has become.

At an early stage, I was very concerned about reproduction of the photographs and had these screen printed for each edition. This meant that at least you could see them clearly, but the printing

of the magazine is costly.

It was not possible to keep on using Staples in High Wycombe and hence the reason the move to the school in Princes Risborough. The equipment that was used had probably seen better days and so quality of the photos and printing got worse with lots of lines running through it.

I trust they have replaced this or you have found another printer as it most important to have clear photos to illustrate your features.

Philip Suter.

Farewell, Mrs Gabbitas

Dear Editor.

As Speen residents know, Mrs. Jean Gabbitas spent a great deal of time and effort in supporting the development of our new village shop and cottages. She has continued her support with weekly purchases there.

I, for one, was dismayed when she lost her council seat in the recent local election. It was doubly worrying because her successor had masterminded the opposition to the Bucks Housing Association plan that has benefited the village.

I fear this change does not bode well for the realisation of the optimism for the future of the village expressed in the Millennium pageant.

Anne Selby
Highwood, Grubbins Lane,

The Shrinking Pension? (Serped or Unserped?)

Dear Editor

May I use your columns to air a very serious change in Government Pensions Policy.

Many villagers of pensionable age or approaching that status may still not be aware that their spouse is about to lose a considerable amount of their inherited state pension after 5 April 2000.

If they are or had been whilst in employment paying Additional Pension (or SERPS as it is more generally known) which was in-

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

roduced in 1978 then this will affect their family.

If they or their employer 'contracted out' into a private pension scheme then they will not be affected unless they made contributions to both SERPS and a private pension scheme as I did

Those of us who paid our National Insurance contributions (which were 'earnings related') into SERPS since 1978 were assured by the Department of Social Security that where one spouse dies the survivor would inherit all of the 'additional pension (SERPS) in addition to their widow/ widowers pension

It has now come to light that when someone dies on or after 6 April 2000, their spouse will only inherit half of the SERPS. It is estimated that on average a widow entitled to inherit her husband's SERPS will receive about £20 a week less. However some people have reported to Age Concern that the loss of income to them would be £40/£50 a week

The change was introduced in the Social Security Act 1986 but there has been little publicity. The DSS leaflet *'A Guide to Retirement Pensions' did not refer to the halving of SERPS for widows/ widowers until 1996 and people who telephoned until recently have been told that their spouse would inherit all their spouse's SERPS with no mention of the April 2000 change.** It has now emerged that the Department of Social Security did not pass the message to its staff until January this year!

In view of the injustice of the change and the fact that people making pension plans since 1986 have been misled into taking wrong decisions, Age Concern has taken up the cudgels and is campaigning for this legislation to be withdrawn. It has now been referred to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, HOWEVER we need to raise as much support as possible from all those who will be affected.

Please telephone Age Concern Information Line on 0800 00 99

66 asking for the note on the 'Campaign for SERPS for widows/ widowers' - they will send up to five copies for your friends

They advise you to write to your MP telling him how you or your spouse will be affected and also to complain to the Benefits Agency at Newcastle.

Write to:

David Lidington MP,
House of Commons,
London SW1A 0AA.

Tell him how your spouse will be affected - he replied to me immediately!

*Source, Age Concern.

** Shadow Secretary of State for Social Security.

Roy Seager

Can Horseriders Read?

Dear Editor

In November 1998 many of us attended the Public Enquiry in North Dean Village Hall to find out if the public footpath (No. 9.) from Coleheath Bottom to the Pink and Lily would be upgraded to a bridleway or kept as a footpath.

In due course a report was issued setting out the findings and the conclusion of this enquiry, namely that it was to be kept a footpath and NOT a bridleway.

This week I walked the footpath in question, which I had not done for some time and immediately I passed through the gate saying NO BRIDLEWAY I was greeted by a large pile of fresh horse manure and obvious evidence of churned up ground and hoof-prints, that some horseriders are taking absolutely no notice of the result of this enquiry.

If a stile were in place of this gate this would obviously put paid to this happening. Perhaps Hampden Estates will change this sometime in the future but until they do we can only hope any horse riders will hopefully read the sign and remember that the public enquiry was held, probably at considerable expense, to settle this question, and that they are now breaking the law when they ride this footpath.

Catherine Butler.

Editors Letter

In spite of everyone doing a tremendous number of additional things this time of year we still have a full issue of 36 pages and have had to defer some very good ideas and information until another time. Sorry to all those who thought up interesting pieces that we would have used, given more space.

Now for the good news. We have been made an offer we can't refuse, that is a web page of our own. If it is set up before this issue is printed then, the the web page address will be shown below. The idea at the moment is to include the previous three issues 15, 16, 17, and the present issue, which our desktop publishing genius has carefully archived (in spite of the editor assuring him we would never need them again). Thankfully he ignored me and kept them so we should be able to transfer them to THE WEB.

We were asked to send copies of this magazine to the archive department at the County Library so that future researchers may have access to the fund of knowledge we proliferate, and I suspect future generations may have a good laugh at what the old locals got up to. This also means we are getting more County information to publish for everyone's benefit.

While I am working, I have a grand stand view of the interior of a bus shelter, which is carefully restored and preserved, although there hasn't been a bus along for at least 15 years to my knowledge. Glancing out of the window I saw yet another person using it for a toilet. The other uses that this bus shelter is put to are the usual experimentation of teenagers with the forbidden fruits of tobacco and the opposite sex. Should a parish

(Continued on page 8)

The India Enfield Challenge

**In aid of Global Cancer Concern (reg. Charity no. 1051192)
To raise money for unique care facilities in Calicut, Kerala,
Southern India.**



Arriving at Heathrow Airport at nine o'clock on a Saturday morning, I found a motley bunch of mainly British recruits assembled around a pile of luggage and looking vaguely disorientated, and I felt right at home.

Attempts by airport staff to move us on throughout the morning were met with a mixture of apathy and ignorance, until at eleven we were told by the organisers that, due to fog in New York, our flight was delayed 24 hours. This put off the onset of the serious alimentary activity that I had been led to expect for another day. Giardia could wait until Monday.

Accommodation was arranged in a luxury hotel, while in Kerala a frenzied Indian Enfield team were moving 135 bikes to a new start at Kettoyam to account for the lost day. Ignorant of my good fortune, I fell in behind Tamara Beckwith (in the words of a friend 'famous for something') to board the plane on Sunday morning, and after an aromatic stop in Bombay in the early hours of Monday. I finally touched down in a very different country at Trivandrum airport, and to the laborious beurocratic organised chaos of Indian immigration. At the very Southern tip of India and just North of the Eight Degrees Channel, pale colonial cotton wear suddenly seemed a good idea as the heat hit you square in the face.

An enlightening four hour coach trip took us up to 30 hours without sleep and the parade ground at bustling Kettoyam, filled with officials, Indians, motorbikes and the Indian equivalent of the Blackpool donkey, scabby, overworked elephants.

Necking bottled water in the afternoon heat, and after mercifully concise opening speeches by all major parties involved in the project, 135 excited Enfields started up in unison and pulled out into the rush hour traffic. With the majority of riders having never ridden

British designed motorbikes, and many passing their tests just weeks before, the result was bedlam. Clutch fade had me stalling and unable to move a dozen times in a river of traffic and blasts of hot diesel fumes, while I jumped up and down on the neutral finder and finally collapsed in a fit of demented giggling.

The next day, despite a 4am start, and possibly due to mild delirium through lack of sleep, the first full day of riding was at times exhilarating, blatting through the Keralan spice forests and sleepy villages and onto the plains of Tamil Nadu. The empty roads did little to prepare us for the mayhem of the next three days.

As the groups split up, my buddy and I ascended steeply into the 7,000 feet Western Ghats (mountains) through the cool canopy of trees, stopping briefly to play with deceptively cuddly monkeys or stop for a hot cup of sweet chi at a roadside cart. Our overnight stay in a mountain top village gave us fantastic food and views, with snake charming and fire-breathing to round off the evening. Throughout the week, we were surprisingly free of unplanned detours, given the complete lack of written directions, although another friend managed a 120km detour on the first day, to add to the planned 250km, eight hour journey. Our luck was just that, I decided.

The following day, after another early start, we dropped down from the mountains

through 40km of steep and stunning hairpins, stopping briefly, as we often did, for some chapatis, fresh from the pan. I'm convinced that the difficulty in telling a shop front from someone's kitchen may have resulted in some confusion once or twice, although none of the locals spoke English so we were never sure.

Back on the plains we travelled through areas untouched by tourism, and were often directed, un-



The Start of the India Enfield Challenge

The India Enfield Challenge

prompted by locals, almost invariably squatting in the dust of a village roadside and beaming from ear to ear. I was enamoured by the cute little waves that I got from pedestrians and motorists alike, rather like the hand movement when you honk a horn. I always waved back, and it was only as the trip was drawing to a close, and thousands of Indians later, that someone told me they were telling me my headlamp was on.

Some moped riders would wave with both hands, so it was unsurprising when one rider wrote off his Enfield (the first but certainly not the last) into one of the mopeds, followed by a brief airborne excursion. Gravity is definitely less there, as these ungainly flights, appearing from a melee of Enfields, were common. Most of the accidents were our fault owing to the short time we had to pick up the highly developed sense of ESP necessary to master the rule of the road: USE YOUR HORN! SOMEONE ELSE TOOK OUT A SMALL ROADSIDE CHILD. CRASH #2.

Riding through towns was invariably like riding through a zoo, a school playground at lunchtime and a busy bus station all rolled into one. Everything was colourful- from the lorries to the silks and the smiles, to the elephant-drawn temples and the horns of the water buffalo, and even the language of the riders being overtaken by a bus on a blind corner. Often you would find yourself hurtling towards the welcoming radiators of a bus, over taking a lorry, overtaking a taxi, forcing you off the road onto the crowded and dusty verge in a flurry of chickens.

That afternoon, we were among the first to arrive in a village just outside the city of Palghat where we were to spend the second night in a palm-roofed barn, separated with colourful mats into dormitories of twenty or so. Our early arrival allowed us some time to investigate the vestiges of colonial rule, a huge dam harnessing a sun-drenched lake stretching out towards the Nigri foothills. The food that evening was exceptional as usual, although the Naaz still wins by a hair...

The local brew was like mead, and just what the doctor ordered, although too much for an executive from the Lake District, who went from sober to paralytic in mid sentence and talked b..... from his mosquito net for the rest of the night, despite being asleep. I was untroubled by cockroaches, and thanked God for alcohol and remembering my earplugs.

The following morning was spent riding down a frenetic major highway, following lobotomised team leaders, dodging the living, dead and thousands of tons of speeding steel, meeting new terrors as we dived through the next cloud of diesel smoke. Skirting the heaving city of Coimbatore, we negotiated Mettupalayam and headed up the mountain road towards a 6,000 foot rolling plateau and the poplars and rhododendrons of the breathtaking, historic town of Ooty. Bikes 0,

HGV 2, PSV 1 and another two right offs. In all, the week would claim a total of twelve. The precipitous twisty descent down little more than a paved track to



Resting at the end of the run at the Taj Hotel, Calicut

the wooded savanna of the Mudumali National Park at 4,500 feet left our brakes and brains just outside Ooty, finally rolling to a halt at Quiet Corner Christian Retreat. Whiskey was consumed surreptitiously through bottles of pop with some more delicious food before a cool novelty night on the roof. The view down the well, with those rickety steps disappearing to infinity, will remain with me.

Another 5.30am start into a steadily hotter day, and I had to keep moving to keep cool in my heavy leather jacket. Two hundred kilometres of more beaming faces and bathing elephants, and untouched views framed by majestic mountains. As we rolled towards the coast, the land flattened and traffic increased until we stopped on the outskirts of Calicut to collect together, prior to a police escorted ride through the busy streets to our destination, the impressive Taj Hotel. Well, that was the idea. My bike, having ridden faultlessly for four days, decided not to start, but following roadside assistance from a friendly Enfield mechanic I was on my way again, riding like a demon to catch up with the tail end of the triumphant procession.

The short and modest closing speech by the head of the unique Care Centre on which your money will be spent was sobering, and had a profound impact on all those concerned. His intensely humane aim, to improve the quality of life of individuals with terminal cancer, is a tremendously worthwhile cause, despite what views people may have on the wider picture and the frustrating political clout and power of huge multinational tobacco companies.

On behalf of Global Cancer Concern, thank you for your donation, without which this project would not have been possible.

Renny Oliver

A message from our Local Councillor

From Paul Rogerson - Newly elected Wycombe District Councillor

Firstly, I would wish to thank everyone (however you voted) who contributed to such a high turnout last Thursday.

Over the Ward the percentage turn out was over 50% - one of the highest in the whole Council. This demonstrates a keen interest within the community in how local affairs are handled ... I also think it is a measure of the interest that two local candidates generated, both concentrating on local issues.

To those of you who gave me your support, thank you again, and to those who supported Jean, may I assure you that I will try to work as hard to achieve the best I can for the village and surrounding area.

Putting politics to one side, I would like to express my thanks to Jean for the way she conducted her

campaign and also for the time and effort she has put into representing



the interests of the village over the past 14 years.

I look forward to keeping you informed of latest developments through the Speen and North Dean News. However please contact me on 488315 if you would like to discuss any community issue with me - I will do my best to answer your query. Thank you,

Paul Rogerson

Editor's Letter

(Continued from page 5)

council spend our money in preserving a public toilet/brothel/opium den?

There are some good uses it is put to. Small children hide in it or jump from the seat to startle mum, and walkers do shelter from bad weather and eat their food there, but I cannot help thinking a simple bench might serve their need nearly as well.

Challenge of the issue! What next? When all the dust has settled on the summer of hard work and great fun surely all the expertise will not simply disappear. What are the future plans of all these people who have found they can sing, dance and act? Watch this space in the Autumn! Please go on telling us what you are doing in your organisation, if we can help let us know. I know what the people in the bus shelter are doing!

Glenn Hart

QUIZ NIGHT

QUESTION NO.1:

WHO WAS ST. GEORGE?

Not such a daft question these days when it seems increasingly acceptable in some circles to promote any national identity except our own.

Nonetheless Speen held a St. George's Day Quiz on April 23rd, when the questions all had an English theme.

Eight teams competed in this event, which was run by Speen Millennium Celebrations, quizmaster Martin Stockley.

At the halfway point competitors were refuelled by a delicious beef casserole with baked potatoes, followed by treacle pudding and custard, all under the ever-capable supervision of Jean Baines. A licensed bar helped to keep some brains sparking (and probably anaesthetised others).

The eventual winners, a team of visitors from Coleshill and Amersham, were presented with rose bushes and boxes of Rose's chocolates to maintain the English theme.

Martin Stockley



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Rotary in Speen



Most readers will know that the Parish of Lacey Green, which includes Speen, is twinned with the village of Hambye in France. What you may not know is that the local Rotary Club (the Rotary Club of Princes Risborough) is twinned with the Rotary Club of Wasserburg in Germany.

Wasserburg is a beautiful town of medieval origins in Bavaria. It is situated in a loop of the mighty river Inn giving it its full name of Wasserburg am Inn. Our club last visited Wasserburg in the Autumn of 1997 when we were treated to wonderful hospitality and saw some of their impressive castles, lakes and mountains. Since then we have been skiing with them in both Austria and Italy.

They visited us in May of this year for a week-end of sightseeing, dining and socialising and, fortunately, were treated to glorious weather! One of our activities was a visit to The National Trust at Waddesdon with a tour of the house and lunch in the private facilities of the newly-restored Old Dairy (which is holding a number of open days this summer and is well worth a look). If you feel that you would like to hire the Old Dairy for your daughter's wedding it is a snip at a mere £5000 plus food and drink, but do it this year because next year the price goes up to £6000!

The photograph shows some of the Speen members at a Murder Night held at Whiteleaf Golf Club in April.

There are about 10 Rotarians living in Speen and North Dean of whom most are members of the Princes Risborough Club which meets at The Gate in Bryants Bottom on Monday evenings. Some are members of the High Wycombe Club which meets

at Adams Park on Tuesday lunchtimes. A meeting is often a meal followed by an invited speaker and is open to members, guests and visiting Rotarians (members may visit any Rotary club in the world and there are 27,000 to choose from!).

Rotary is a world-wide, service organisation whose motto is 'service above self'. Membership is by invitation and each member represents their own trade or profession within their local club and are committed to help those in need, to encourage high ethical standards and to work towards world understanding and peace. We enjoy extensive social, cultural and recreational activities as well as enabling others to help themselves and to provide funds for local, national and international good causes.

Many readers may know of individuals or organisations who have benefited, for instance our support for individuals attending Raleigh International, a school expedition to Greenland, VSO, the restoration of the church clock, disabled youth leadership awards and stewarding at the Risborough Fair. All the funds raised by each Rotary club for charitable purposes are given away each year to dozens of recipients with none retained within Rotary.

If you think you have something to contribute as a member of Rotary or you know of local needy cases why not speak to a Rotarian. *David Flynn*



Murder Most Foul!

Rotarian members at a recent "murder" evening held at the Whiteleaf Golf Club.

I'm in Charge!

Recently, while Sue my wife, was away in hospital having an operation. During her absence one day, I was accompanied along our road by young five year old Jake. It is a regular habit of his to follow us to our house whenever we return home, whether on foot or by car, usually updating us as we go, with his latest news on the games he is playing and with whom.

For his own reasons he addresses me as "Uncle Bill" but appears not to have adopted a pet name for my wife just yet.

On this occasion, when reaching our garden gate, he looked at me with large quizzical eyes and said, "is your wife indoors?"



Five year old Jake
"Authoritative
Appointments!"

"No," I replied!

"Where is she then?" insisted little Jake.

"She's in hospital," came my second reply!

"Why is she in hospital?" was the next and inevitable question!

"She's in hospital having an operation," was my honest response! At this point I could see my young companion was struggling to reconcile himself with the word "operation!"

After a very brief pause, his solution to his dilemma was a swift and complete switch of tactics. The next question came with another and more intense quizzical look.

"Are you in charge of everything now then?"

After her return home and during her convalescence period, inevitably boredom set in occasionally and my wife was tempted to try things which perhaps she shouldn't at that stage. It gave me a golden opportunity to dissuade her, by reminding her that "I was in charge of everything" – by appointment, to Jake!

Reg Taylor

SPEEN POTTERY

I am planning a series of pottery classes to start in July.

All enquires to:

Tessa – Tel: 01 494 488206

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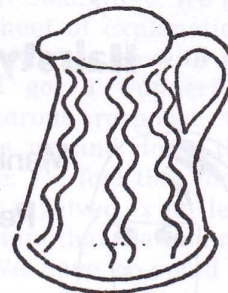


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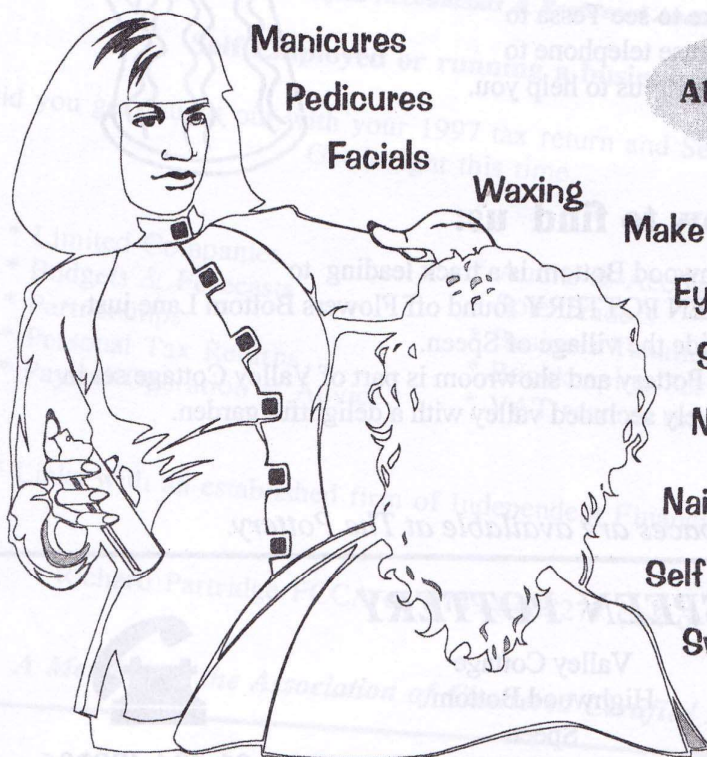


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News From North Dean

Mrs. Daphne Nuttgens.

Of the two remarkable North Dean ladies who will reach 90 this year, the younger one is Mrs. Nuttgens for whom Glaziers, at the top of Pigotts Hill, has been home for almost 60 years.

She first visited North Dean in the late 1930's, to stay with the Gills at Pigotts. Her family the Reids (P. R. Reid of Colditz fame was her brother) were friends of the Fosters, and Anthony Foster worked with Eric Gill at Pigotts. She had studied design at the Royal College of Art and moved in artistic Catholic circles.

She had already met Eddie Nuttgens, probably the finest worker in stained glass of his generation and newly the Gill's neighbour. He had built himself a house - Glaziers - on the hill above his previous one (now Longhurst) after the sad and early death of his first wife. Eddie Nuttgens and Daphne Reid were married in 1940 and she took responsibility for his four children, the oldest then 14 - and bore him eight more.

For much of the war, the Nuttgens lived in Dorset, and Glaziers was occupied by various RAF officers, including Wing Commander Boyle, later Officer Commanding Bomber Command. Mrs. Nuttgens had little time for local life on their return as she was so fully occupied with her growing family and a household that sometimes included apprentices and of-ten visitors. Glaziers was always busy but never more so than the time in 1947

when the studio burned down and the living room had to become a temporary workshop! The older children attended the little school then existing at Pigotts before going to boarding school. Many Wycombe shops then delivered to the villages - notably the "Imperial Stores" - and there were regular expeditions by bus or car to shop.

Mrs. Nuttgens admits to forgetting things occasionally these days and after many "doctor free" years even saw a doctor last winter! She now needs some help with daily routines, which her family provides. Joe continues the family tradition of stained glass at Glaziers. In July her family will gather from far and near and her children, her grandchildren and her great grandchildren will be wishing her a happy 90th birthday! She has "at least" 66 grandchildren and great grandchildren!

Nick Wheeler-Robinson.

North Dean's Third World Project.

A group in North Dean wanted to mark the Millennium by doing something to help another small community in the third world.

After discussion it was decided to ask all North Dean households to contribute just whatever they would normally spend on an evening out, to the fund, administered by the Village Hall Committee. We put out a sheet of explanation and followed it up with visits - and got a wonderful and generous response to the idea up and down the village. We feel that the number involved is no less important than the sum raised.

We have co-opted David Kemp of Flint Cottage onto our committee as he has experience, contacts and skills from ten years on and off in Uganda. We are planning a meeting in the village hall for David to talk about ideas and needs in the village that he knows of personally and to discuss our common concerns.

In addition, funds for the project will be supplemented by a supper - dance at Pigotts on 19th June.

Nick Wheeler-Robinson.

Don't Forget! - North Dean Village Fete - 7th August.

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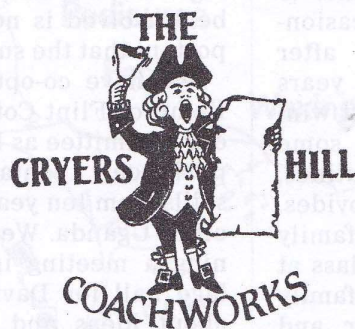


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THESE WOODED HILLS

"The parish I live in is a very abrupt, uneven country, full of hills and wood, and therefore, full of birds"; so Gilbert White emphasised the interaction of terrain, cover and animal life right at the beginning of his "The Natural History of Selbourne". Geologically, the Downs are similar to the Chilterns but woodlands have predominated in the latter. These woodlands differ from those of around four thousand years ago when the Icknield Way first was formed through trees and thorn scrub on the hills above lowland swamps. They are all made, or at least managed, woods, not primeval forest such as lingered on in Rothiemurchur in Scotland or the truly awesome North American forest that Daniel Boone described as so wild and dreadful as to inspire terror (an effect that the true forest had on the nature-loving Thoreau).

Grubbins Lane was a track for getting out timber felled on either side after sale of the land in 1852, and continued as a way between Speen and Parslows Hillock accessing the fields on either side, parallel to the Blackthorn Hedge path on the edge of Monkton Wood and, on the other side, Highwood or Kingswood Bottom track. Cleared of timber in the 1860s of Farmers Glory in the 1825-35 period, these fields tumbled down to grass, a local brickfield being abandoned and the farmer putting rabbits on the ground to get some return or food. From 1939 there was another prosperous arable time, now it is back to grazing and hay. This sequence of events is typical of "marginal" land and illustrates the countryside is not a static thing. One can also see on these fields, as in the woods when trees are blown down or soil eroded, how shallow the soil is on the Chiltern "tops".

The nature of the woods around Speen seems to have remained remarkably constant for a thousand years: relatively open under a high tree top canopy they supported numerous herds of swine around the Saxon farms in the woods at the time of the Norman conquest, the pigs feeding off acorns, beech nuts and other fruit much as occur today. While oxen would be used for ploughing down in the Vale, I get the impression that horses were preferred for that and transport in the hills with track ways markedly different from many of the current roads, many then centred on large country houses such as Hampden while where these were absent, doubtless it was true as Chesterton said that the rolling English

drunkard made the rolling English roads, though you would not roll to get to Speen or Uphill as it was sometimes called.

The trees in the woods around Speen have been predominately broad leaved – beech, oak, birch, whitebeam, sycamores, - with hollies (particularly in evidence now) and with yew, some very old, in places away from livestock and inaccessible. Spanish chestnut trees were planted around Hampden House way back: in 1992 one Spanish chestnut tree in woods there was about 60 feet high with a circumference of 19 feet 6 inches at 3 feet up from ground level, indicating great age, but still thriving. Thorn scrub and brambles are as ever nature's "come back kids" on cleared land not replanted. Prior to 1939 the woods were, I believe, managed by Mr. Hobart Hampden on natural regeneration lines that he had used while in the Indian forestry service. Conifers were relatively rare; larch on College Plantation were felled in 1914-18, replanted about 1932 (larch and oak mixture) with the larch felled in recent years, leaving an oak and beech mixture with plantings of spruce, the latter with other conifers being planted in blocks in Monkton wood from 1950 onwards initially for game cover. Larch and conifers seems to be a useful addition in moderation to encourage variety of bird and mammalian life, including new red squirrels and provide extra cover for badgers.

The survival of the Chiltern woods in the 16th century when those of Kent and Surrey were de-

(Continued on page 16)

spoiled for firewood, charcoal and timber for London seems to me to have been due to the sheer difficulty of getting fellings transported – hills interspersed with small valleys, steep gradients, no convenient river or canals. Most of the timber was used very locally and what was sent out had been worked “on site” as it was by bodgers until as late as 1948.

Another aspect of the Chiltern woods that should be mentioned was their use as a refuge by out-of-favour politicians (to avoid the chop in London but handy to quickly return on a change of government), unorthodox religious (a quiet life rather than martyrdom) and footpads and highwaymen preying off the routes from London to Oxford and the North (as did Speen’s highwaymen based on Highwood Bottom).

By 1939 farm horses and those used for deliveries of milk, papers, fuel were slowly giving way to tractors and vans – though recent TV items on the 1939-45 wartime have illustrated how horses remained the main agent of transport in much of western and all of eastern Europe, apart from railways and canals.

The Green Belts established after 1945 have

been pretty effective around here but have increasingly come under great pressure from expanding and fusing conurbations and road ways, culminating now in an assumed need for 4 million extra houses by 2010 and an assumed knowledge of where people then will want/need to live in England. This combined with the idea that everyone having access to everywhere will enable them to enjoy the countryside has raised, in acute form, the question of exactly what is the “countryside” that is to be preserved and for what reasons and how. It cannot exist as a museum artefact, maintenance and economic use such as extracting timber necessarily involves change and some damage, and all amenity users can harm an environment if there are enough of them or they just mess it up. Sheer numbers of feet wear down paths in the Pennines and Snowdonia, overseas national parks in the U.S.A. such as the Yellowstone have major problems. In our woods, damage, litter and fly-tipping increase, as it seems to me does the risk of fire in a dry year. It is encouraging that so many people about here are keen to help keep the countryside in good shape.

Francis Caldwell

Saturday, 10th July 1999

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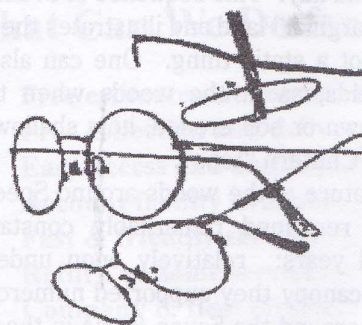
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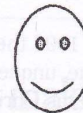
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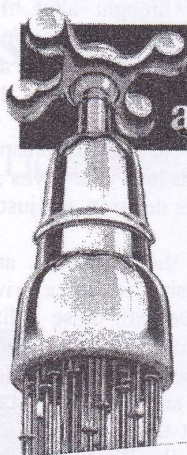
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NEWS FROM SPEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Andy writes:

Shared Friendships and Experiences

Circling over a brown and dusty rock strewn landscape we descended towards the airport of the sprawling and expanding twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. It would be my third visit to the Sion Fellowship, a network of 300 churches, and their Bible College.

Each visit to India have brought there own surprises.

In 1996 the impact was of the grinding poverty and the unquestionable realisation that the gospel of Jesus Christ really is good news for the poor. I had never witnessed such transformed lives from the simple decision to believe that God does love them. In 1998 I saw at first hand something of the power of Jesus to heal bodies and to restore fractured relationships.

This year was to bring different challenges but the primary task remained the same: to share with my friends the principles and practices of Christian leadership. Some days before the flight news had come through that Raju Babu - one of the main leaders and a man God has used to bring good news and healing to many - had been drowned whilst saving a young child. It was a typical act of selflessness from a man who, over the years, had received and ignored several death threats from militant Hindu extremists.

It was with trepidation that we accepted the additional purpose to our visit, to somehow comfort the stunned and grieving church. We wept with them in their loss; we rejoiced with them in what Raju had meant to them; and we admired the resolve of this oppressed minority to continue to push on, trusting God,

reaching out to share God's love in practical ways with those around.

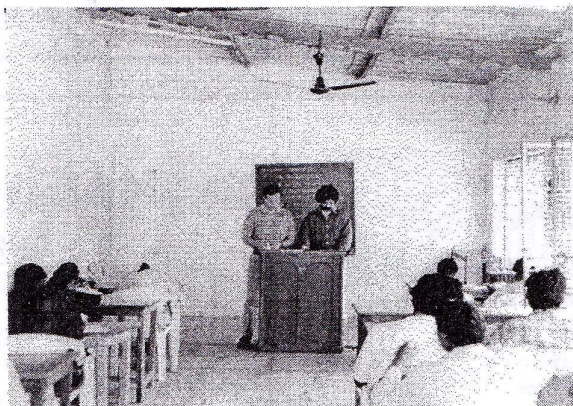
We were welcomed with open arms and great hospitality. I've lost count of the number of homes we visited for meals, eating with only the right hand in good Indian fashion. On the first night we were invited to an Engagement Party, where the bride and groom met for the first time, and the two families (including distant relatives)

were introduced to each other, including details of their jobs and career prospects! Seeing this arranged marriage brought alive the social world of the New Testament - a society where arranged marriages were the norm - and the depth of meaning of the command, 'Husbands love your wives'; a deliberate decision, not just a feeling!

Despite the privations and the parasites it was a privilege to be with these Indian

Christians; to appreciate how much they love their country, their concern and self-sacrifices for their fellow countrymen and women. Few are rich by the standards of Western materialism, but they shared a richness of life which makes much in the West seem hollow. I wonder what next year's visit will bring?

Andy Gower.



Spreading the word - through an interpreter.

Summary of Weekly Church Activities

Sundays:	10:30 am	Worship for all ages including Creche and Sunday School for 3's-11's and Teens discussion group.
	6:00 pm	Music Group.
	6:30 pm	Meeting for Prayer.
Mondays:	8:00 pm	'Now to Live the Life' Course in Speen Village Hall.
Wednesdays:	10:00-11:30am	"Time Out"
Fridays:	7:00 pm	"Meet With God" - exploring Christianity through activities and the Bible. Open to all curious 12-16 year olds.

Beechdean Dairies proudly presents
The Beechdean Blitz

Beechdean Celebrates 10 Years.

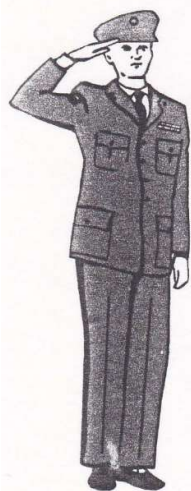
In 1989 Beechdean Dairies started making ice cream. Ten years later it is celebrating the 10th Anniversary of a family business. Over the years they have had a number of charity events to celebrate its continuing success and to give something back to the community they work in.

This year will be bigger and better than ever before and to make sure every one gets in the mood **The Glenn Miller Orchestra** will be playing. The whole theme of the night is a 1940's Big Band Blitz with food, entertainment, music and atmosphere from the era.

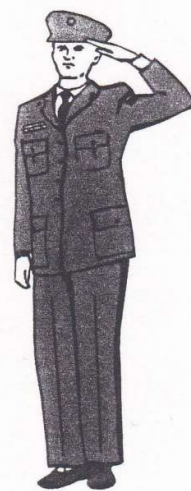
It is a charity event and the proceeds will go to **Speen School, Speen Pre-School and the RAF Benevolent Fund.**

Tickets are £25.00 and will be available from :

Susie Howard	562775
Kate Kent	565470
Denise Garfitt	488274
Speen Stores.	



Saturday,
11th September 1999



P.T.A. News



Speen School PTA.

The main fund raiser of the year was the "Auction of Promises" in March. This year with the benefit of our excellent catalogue of the items, pledges and promises. We were able to produce a profit of about £3,000

Much of the credit for assembling such a varied catalogue must go to Paula Popham. On the night there were some good figures achieved on some of the items, but equally there were some bargains about. The main lot on the list, a holiday in Cyprus, failed to reach it's reserve.

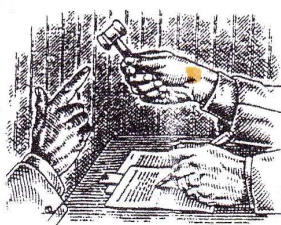
Thanks also go to Dave Evans for his ability to make us spend more than we ever intended. The total is also helped by the many people who submitted postal bids before the event. Even if your bids failed to secure the lot you wanted, it is of great benefit because it adds more competitive bids on the night.

Almost every item sold with the best bid being £200 for Flysim DC 9 flight simulator training. A visit to the House of Commons and tea with David Lidington sold for £100. Tickets to Wycombe Wanderers game with Wigan scheduled for 17th April sold for a relatively modest figure. The game was cancelled and it turned out that the rearranged fixture was in fact their last crucial home game which saw them stage an exciting come back to win 2-1.

By the time this edition is delivered it will be late June and our social highlight of the year "The Black & White Ball" II will be

upon us. The event on 3rd July is already heavily subscribed, but if you still require tickets please call me as soon as possible (488016).

At the end of the Summer term, Ross my youngest son is leaving Speen School, and I will be standing down after four years on the PTA, three years being as chairman. I would estimate that over the last three years some £18,000 will have been raised to help fund the school.



The school budget remains limited and this PTA fund remains essential to keep the facilities up to a good standard and to provide extras such as computers etc. These extras help to ensure that Speen school offers a well equipped establishment in a glorious setting which in turn ensures that it remains popular with villagers and parents from further afield.

Many thanks to any villagers who have helped at the school or who have supported our events.

Peter Symonds.



Beavers, Cubs and Scouts

After a long struggle Speen lost it's Beavers and Cubs group a couple of years ago.

Several of the boys from the village attend successful groups in Naphill and Hughenden. In addition to the midweek meeting they attend various regional events: Fun Days, competitions, Sports events and quizzes etc.

I believe that there are vacancies for Beavers in Naphill and Hughenden and there should be vacancies in the Cubs groups shortly. Girls are also allowed to join, I believe. Whilst Beavers caters for 6 to 8 year olds and Cubs 8 to 10 ½ year olds, there is then the Naphill Scout Group to progress onto.

For further general information you could contact:

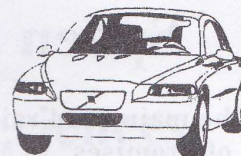
Janice Slocombe
01494 563365

Or for Naphill Beavers try:

Barry Reading
01494 447121

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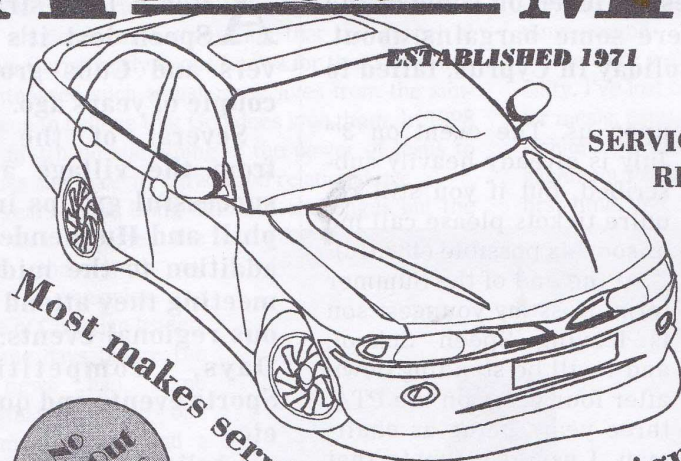
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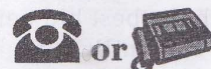
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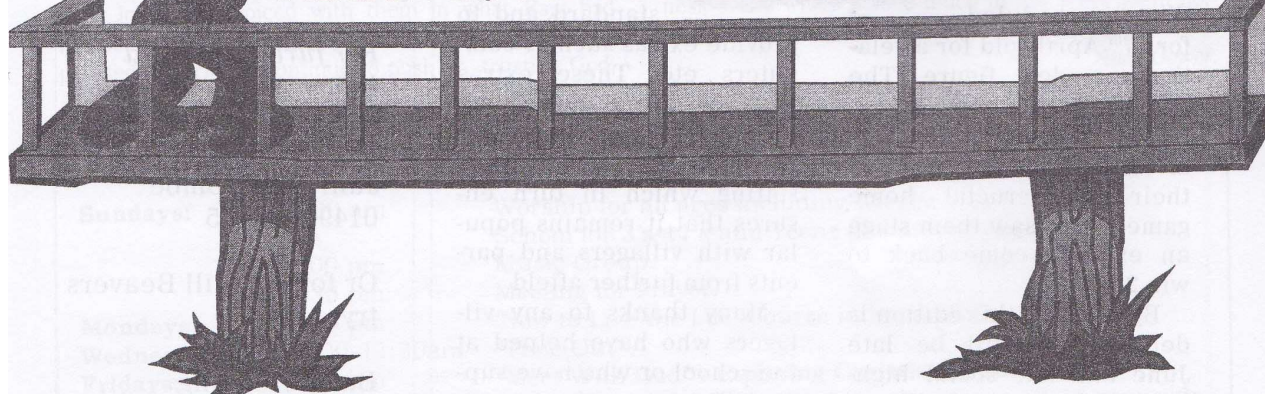


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Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority - Press Release.

Prepare NOW for the Millennium!

Don't let fire-fighters be your first footers in the new Millennium. Whether you are planning a big party, or dinner party with friends and family, or planning a quite night at home you can reduce the possibility of having an emergency that night.

Churches are suggesting that you put a candle in your window for the night of December 31 to see in the new Millennium. If you plan to do this use one of the candles provided by the church and follow the instructions carefully. Fill the candle holder with water to the required level (so that the candle is extinguished when it burns low). If you don't have one of these special candles and you want to put a light in your window use a night light in a proper night light holder. Place the candle away from curtains and other inflammable objects and ensure that the window is closed so that no draughts can blow something onto the flame or blow the candle over.

If you plan to hold a firework or bonfire party, or be involved in a public display, or lighting a beacon, why not attend a free seminar being held in Aylesbury during September? The seminar will provide advice from Trading Standards, Environmental and fire officers, and is designed to help you run your firework or bonfire party safely. For information contact Station Officer Chris Gill on 01296 424666.

Any home or business that has a fire alarm should

check it to ensure that it is Millennium compliant. If it is not and your insurance is dependant on the alarm you may not be covered. Contact your supplies or manufacturer to check now.

and last, but not least, take a few small steps to protect yourself from the ravages of fire. If you don't own a smoke detector-get one now. If you have a smoke alarm check it operates once a month by pushing the test button. Change the battery once a year and clean the alarm carefully once a year by vacuuming to stop the collection of dust. Ensure any non-essential electrical items are turned off when you go to bed and when you leave the premises and close all internal doors also, as this will go along way to protecting your property from smoke damage.

If you are over 60, a single parent, or have a disability and you live in Buckinghamshire, the fire service will provide a smoke detector and fit it free of charge. *

Chief Fire Officer, Jeff Goddard, said "The Millennium presents a difficult time for the fire service as no one is certain what is going to happen. People can help the brigade by bearing fire safety in mind and checking to ensure that equipment is Millennium compliant in advance of the night."

**For more details call Station Officer Chris Gill on 01296 424666. April 29 1999*

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- Wild venison and rabbit terrine with Cumberland sauce and fresh papaya £5.95
- Scotch salmon gravadlax with oriental dressing £7.95
- Carpachio of courgettes, sweet anchovies, olives, Parmesan and rocket salad £6.95
- Fresh foie gras with onion preserve £8.95

MAINS

- Smoked salmon and fresh Devon crab £10.95
- Roasted breast free range chicken with a wild boar, sherry and leek sausage, Beaujolais sauce £11.95
- Char-grilled loin veal with wild mushrooms, cream, red wine sauce £12.95
- Grilled breast of Lumsdale duck with spiced red cabbage, red wine sauce £12.95
- Roasted best end prime lamb, apricot, mint and mango chutney £13.95
- Grilled fresh Devon scallops and bacon with a chive and lemon butter, tomato sauce £13.95
- Fresh fillet of seabass, char-grilled, with wild mushrooms and butter sauce. £13.95

DESSERTS

- Grand Marnier and chocolate iced parfait with a vanilla sauce £4.95
- French apple tart served warm with ice cream £4.95
- Whiskey and caramel delice with a coffee sauce £4.95
- Cassis blackcurrant miroir with a raspberry and vanilla sauce £4.95
- Farmhouses cheeses with grapes, walnuts and celery wheat wafers £4.95
- Bread and butter pudding with vanilla ice cream £4.95

The above selection is also available on the set price restaurant menu.
All dishes are subject to availability. Prices are correct at the time of going to print.

The Old Plow is opened for lunch Tuesday to Sunday inclusive. Last orders are taken at 1.45. We are also open for dinner Tuesday to Saturday inclusive and last orders are taken at 8.45. For reservations, telephone 01494 488300.

Chef Patron and Restaurateur, Malcolm and Olivia Cowan



Speen WI

Wartime Memories

Mr Cumming, our speaker at the March meeting, first came to the Chilterns as an evacuee during the London Blitz. He recounted the stories of his youth spent in the area, which was clearly quite different from his home in London.

Many of the places which he recalled are still around even if they are now changed with the times and members who knew the area well enjoyed being taken back or hearing how these locations had changed.

A fascinating collection of wartime mementoes interested both members and Mr Cumming and he chose an American draughts game and a set of magazines from a vast collection owned by a member's husband as the most interesting.

An Evening of Celebration

April saw the celebration of 39 years of an Evening WI in Speen. Members were joined by visitors from other WIs in the Hampden Group and enjoyed a superb meal prepared by Sharon Ridgewell of Speen Stores.

A very contented audience then settled back to listen to Dr Audrey Hogarth. Her subject was superstitions - which none of us ever really admit to - but as she took us through some of the stories there were many heads nodding agreement to the weird things we often do to ward off the bad luck and ensure the good.

Also in May, Speen will be hosting one of the County Rambles and has more than 80 walkers.



Stepping out on a WI County Ramble!

In May, the institute hosted a County Ramble on what proved to be a rather wet evening. Nevertheless all our 82 visitors appeared to enjoy the delights of the local countryside as well as the delicious hot supper organised by Jean Baines.

May Meeting.

At the May meeting of Speen WI, members considered the resolutions for the Intermediate General Meeting in June. There was lively discussion and debate about issues ranging from genetically modified foods and the future of rural communities to screening for ovarian cancer and international women's human rights. The delegate at the IGM will obviously have a great many ideas and opinions to consider when casting her vote.

The June meeting will encourage the making of hanging baskets for the Summer season and visitors are very welcome to join us for what promises to be an expert look at the techniques involved.

Future Events

Thursday, 1st July.

A Ramble around Speen.
Comp. Our Village, Quiz.

Thursday, 5th August.

Healthy Eating.
Mrs B. Owen.
Comp. Your Favourite Healthy.
Recipe. (samples welcome!)

Thursday, 2nd September.

Line Dancing.
Mrs. J. Brown
Competition:
The best dressed cowgirl (you).
Bloom of the month.

Thursday, 7th October.

Rendezvous in Russia.
Mr. J R. F. Bishop.
Comp. A Russian Reminder.
Bloom of the Month.

Thursday, 4th November.

Annual Meeting.
Pot Luck Supper.

Thursday, 2nd December.

My Favourite Jazz
Mrs. M. Uglow.
Competition:
The jazziest parcel wrap.
Bloom of the month.

The Tailor's Accounts

Robert Stevens of Cottage Farm, Speen was a tailor in the 1890s. We are indebted to David Eckle who found a bonfire of a shed beside Cottage Farm in 1976. He rescued one book of many, but what a find! It was Robert's order book 1889 to 1898, week by week.

Robert Stevens was born 1849, son of Thomas Stevens, Master Tailor, and Charlotte. They were also the licensees of The King William IV inn.

The upstairs living room of the Inn
is called Tailor's room to this day!

By the 1871 census date, Thomas had died, his three eldest sons had moved away (two had become tailors). Widow Charlotte continued as innkeeper with her two younger sons, Robert 23 and Free 14 as tailors. Ten years later - 1881 - the Inn was run by Ruth Stevens a widow aged 27 (possibly a daughter in law of Charlotte). Robert had married Sarah and had one daughter Mabel age 6 and they were living in half of Cottage Farm. A dealer Thomas Devening lived in the other half, whom we will meet again.

David Howarth, now of Cottage Farm, has deeds showing:

10th November 1890: Robert Stevens bought Cottage Farm of 10 acres for £520. The sellers assisted the sale by a mortgage of £400 in their own names. (Robert never paid off the principal amount!) The 1890s were the time of an agricultural depression. His order book of 1889 to 1897 survives. It is an account of his customers.

The Speen craftsmen were regular buyers but Robert also sewed for forty or fifty Lacey Green folks, and for sixty or more outside the local parish. Many were buying their clothes via "Clubs." They would put in a shilling a week while having their pint of beer, and then drew out their "credit" to buy their trousers. The Clubs were at The Whip, West Wycombe, High Wycombe, Speen Club, and Bradenham Club.

Robert had the benefit of a regular weekly income from each club.

Here is a sample page:

1897		435
Week ending Apr May 1st		
J. Forrest Esq.		
Master Charlie		
2 pairs trousers general repair and pressed		4 6
Master Frank Making Knickers		6 6
310 2 pairs trousers repaired pressed and 1 pair new		1 6
Morning coat and D.B. vest cleaned repaired and buttoned		4 0
Master Guy pair cord riding breeches		1 0
cloth continuations		1 0
2 pairs trousers repaired and pressed		
Morning coat and D.B. vest cleaned repaired and buttoned		

John Forrest's account for his three sons, May 1897

Other customers were:

Sidney Turner, Hampden,	
Cloth suit.	£3/9/0
F. Stone, Kingshill	
Tweed Trousers & vest.	£1/16/0
Alfred Saunders, Speen	
Cord trousers	14/0d.
Mr Hearne, Oxford St. High Wycombe,	
Cloth Trousers,	£1/1/0
J. Forrest, Lacey Green	
Ulster with Cape,	£2/18/6
Wm. Parslows, Hillock Speen Club	
Velveteen Vest 4 pockets	
Velvet Cord Trousers	£1/8/0
George Ridgley, Speen Chipping Norton,	
Trousers & Vest,	£1/15/0

We see the entry for J. Forrest above. This was John Forrest of Grymsdyke and a major Landowner (Speen Farm, Stocken Farm). You will recall we met John Forrest as President of the Cottage Garden Society Show 27th July 1891 when three residents were killed by lightning. After the tragedy Robert Stevens made two mourning bands - one shilling each - for him. The entry for 1897 1st May shows alterations and repairs to clothes for his three sons. (See the actual copies) Also shown are pictures of servants' clothes. On 8th May 1897 two suits of livery for butler £8.8.6

Other "noble customers" were:

The Earl of Buckingham, Hampden House
24th April 1897.

Rev. H. M. Wells. Prestwood 16th January 1892.

Leonard Jacques of Horseden 11th May 1895 -
Coachman's Livery, £13/13/0

John Forrest paid his bills every six months -
as the cash book shows.

January 1893	£23/13/6
July 1893	£35/10/0 etc.

Local craftsmen paid five or six weeks after receipt of bills.

For the nine years Robert made five garments per week and also made numerous alterations, pressings, and repairs.

Cottage Farm is now a small Victorian (slate Roof) cottage built about 1850 to 1860, during a period of agricultural prosperity. Why then a farm?

The early land deeds show it was about ten acres to the South - the whole of the triangle between Chapel Hill and Coleheath Bottom down to the scout hut. The account book has a few entries showing how Robert made use of the land:

5th October 1890 Thomas Devening (a dealer)
Land for one year £20/0/0
21st November 1896 H. Ridgely
6 weeks and 2 days keeping a donkey 5/0d.
Sack chaff 1/6d., 4 trusses hay 8/0d.
1 pup 2/0d.

Pre Christmas 1896 and 1897

5th & 12th December:

H. Ridgeley	-	27 lbs of pork @ 5d
Alfred Darvill	-	piece of pork 2/0d
Fredrk Cartwright	-	piece of pork 2/1d

7th October 1897:

C. Stevens, Prestwood Butcher		
Bought:	-	Sow £2.5.0d.
	-	9 pigs @ 14/0d each
		=£9/12/0
Sold	-	1 fat sow, £6/0/0
	-	8 pigs @ £1/4/0
		=£9/12/0

Did he get the sow and pigs for fattening and then sell them back to C. Stevens in October?

Week Ending April 24 th		
Turner Free		
Hampden		
258	Cloth Trousers	1 0 0
To dams Geo.		
Brookwell		
	Tweed riding breeches & box leggings	15 0
	Business trousers and	1 0
12	altering business trousers	2 6
The Earl of Buckinghamshire		
Coachman		
	riding breeches and leggings	
60	shaped, & stable coat and vest	15 0
	pair riding trousers	1 5 0
	Brook coat repaired	4 6
60	pair of elastic buckskin livery	
	breeches	2 10 0
Groom		
	Remaking box coat	15 0
	altering and repairing livery	
60	breeches	4 6
	Treble tweed stable suit	3 9 0
	and livery coat and vest	3 10 0
Anderson William		
Darvill's hill		
250	bord trousers for Uncle	19 0

A page from the accounts book of April, 1897.

Could anyone help please? We would like to know the meaning of various tailoring terms.

Trousers were called:

West, Cord, Serge, Tweed, Fancy, Scotch, Business.

Coats were called:

Melton, Treble tweed cloth, Fancy, Shooting, Eton jacket, Blue flannel.

There are regular references to "swan's down lining." What was this?

Replies to Bob Johnston please.

Buckinghamshire County Council

Comments from Bucks County Council's Area Office

Highway Maintenance

Once again we have been through a protracted round of inspections, meetings, discussions and negotiations and have finally received confirmation of our budget for the 99/00 year.

This year has been particularly difficult with severe cutbacks in particular with structural maintenance but I am pleased to say that next year looks more optimistic. Although rates have risen both Central Government grant funding and our own funding has increased to allow both additional structural maintenance and the reinstatement of a surface

dressings programme. My thanks go to our County Councillors for both recognising the problem and doing something about it.

What does this mean to you? Well general highway repairs and works such as pothole filling, grass cutting, gully emptying etc. will continue, the same level of winter maintenance will be provided and more major works will take place in your area, including Monkton Way, Speen-footway resurfacing, scheme.

Should you have any queries about this scheme or any other highways maintenance matter, please ring the Area Office on 01494 475315.

Local Election News

Hughenden Parish Council.

John Rogers from North Dean was returned unopposed to this Parish Council for a four year term and is again chairman.

Lacey Green Parish Council.

Don White from Speen was returned unopposed to this Parish Council.

We are grateful to both these Parish Councils for their support with grants for the coming year.

Aylesbury Mobile Library

Calling Alternate Thursdays.

Hughenden Valley	Village Hall	11.35 – 11.50 am
Hughenden Valley	School	11.55 – 12.25
Hughenden Valley	Harrow	12.30 – 12.40
Bryants Bottom	The Gate	1.50 - 2.05 pm
Great Hampden	Hampden Arms	2.15 – 2.25 pm.
Speen	Hampden Road	2.35 – 2.50 pm
North Dean	Village Hall	3.00 – 3.10 pm

Dates for 1999

July 8 th , & 22 nd ,	August 5 th , & 19 th .	September 2 nd , 16 th , & 30 th .
October 14 th , & 28 th ,	November 11 th , & 25 th .	December 9 th , & 23 rd .

Planning Applications

Hughenden Parish Council

The following comments were made:-

SN/99.05373/LBC	Installation of 7 replacement dormer windows at The Dower House, Speen Road, North Dean.	No Objection providing this conforms with Listed Building Regulations.
CCJ/99/05352/FUL	Erection of conservatory to rear of Under the Hill, Speen Road, North Dean	No Objections were made.

HAVE THE GYPSIES ARRIVED, OR JUST GOOD FORTUNE?

I have always wanted a gypsy caravan – the idea of getting back to nature, or just a romantic notion?

An opportunity arose recently on a visit to our son's village in Cambridgeshire. It was Thriplow Daffodil Weekend, with working Shire horses, sheepdog and craft demonstrations, plant and cake stalls and open gardens to visit. The whole village take part to provide a great day out for all the family.

We wandered around in the Spring sunshine and I spotted a delightful decorated gypsy caravan in one of the gardens. I soon became engaged in conversation with the proud owner and heard how she acquired it from a local gypsy. She said she would be seeing Bill soon and would put me in touch with him. I was very excited about the prospect of acquiring my own "Palace on Wheels" for the garden. We continued to admire the other village gardens before arriving at the cricket pavilion for tea. Amongst the excited chatter we overheard a conversation about 'someone' who was visiting the gardens and instead of buying the usual home-made jam and cakes was thinking about buying a real gypsy caravan.

I had been assured that Bill was a very straightforward honest character but would need

cash payment for any deal and was likely to appear with the goods at short notice. Sure enough the next evening I was surprised by the telephone call from Bill, who had exactly what I was looking for and would deliver it next day. Hurried financial arrangements were made and the agreed sum sealed in a brown envelope.

Bill had no map and only a very hazy idea of anywhere West of Luton. However, he arrived the following morning with the caravan secured on a low loader which he and his wife were towing. They carefully unloaded, and then picked up the shafts and dragged it across the garden to the chosen site beneath the cherry trees. Bill explained that he and his friends travel up to the Appleby Horse Fair in Yorkshire each year with their vans pulled by a pony, all the way from Cambridge.

I was thrilled with my new acquisition and soon Bill and his wife set off on their return journey without even opening the envelope to check the contents! That evening the local farmers called by and seemed concerned at the possible arrival of gypsies in Speen. Bill had stopped by the farm for directions, causing much speculation and curiosity.

It was certainly my good fortune to come across the owner of the caravan and of course, gypsy Bill!



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Farewell Dear Molly...

Of all the roles that form a life
Daughter, sister, mother, wife
Friend, companion, ear to tell
You played each part so very well.

Your friendship brought much joy to us
You laughed a lot and hated fuss
You lifted us when things were dark
You gave us love and gave us heart.

We treasure now the time we shared
The way you showed you always cared
Your courage warmed us in your pain
We'll never know your like again.

Dear Molly now we bid farewell
We'll miss you more than words can tell
The void is awful, the dark despair
But in our thoughts, you'll still be there.

Goodnight sweet Molly rest in peace
The pain has gone in your release
Your soul ascended up above
You leave behind unquestioned love.



In February Molly Janes gave up her brave fight to stay with us.

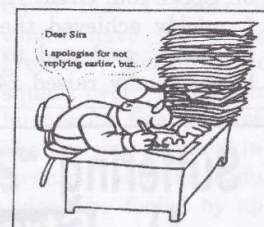
She lived all her life in these two villages and judging by the amount of people who went to Amer-sham to say "good-bye" to her, many of you lost a dear friend.

Both the family and the Iain Rennie Hospice at Home would like to express their thanks and appreciation to her many friends and relatives who so kindly and generously donated a total sum of £ 1,200. To a very caring charitable nursing organisation.

We all have happy memories but one of her many friends wrote the following verses, which with his permission and that of the family I would like to share with you – remembering someone we are all proud to have known.

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THE TAJ MAHAL CHALLENGE

(or – Another Passage To India)

One of my regular and boring mid life crisis conversations with the Seekins in September last year resulted in Cherry applying on my behalf for details of the Whizz Kidz Taj Mahal Challenge, 350 Km across Rajasthan from Jaipur to Agra by gearless mountain bike. Well, to my surprise and no doubt the incredulity of the Seekins, I took up the challenge and got myself reasonably fit for the task.

Whizz Kidz is a great charity, providing powered mobility aids for children in the UK. To qualify for the challenge I had to commit to raising £2500. A daunting task, but Whizz Kidz is a worthy cause deserving a little time and effort on my part. Thanks to business acquaintances, colleagues, and the extraordinary generosity of friends and the kind people of Speen and Great Hampden I quickly achieved the initial financial goal and to date I have actually raised £4700 or

so. The reaction of so many local people, many of whom I must say I don't know that well, has been heart warming, the generosity of pocket and spirit has been a pleasure.

Before I knew it I was boarding a plane and on my way. I met my forty one travelling companions at Heathrow on March 5th. Ranging in age from 18 to 64, they were a diverse mixture of people. I did my usual thing, pre-judged my fellow cyclists on first acquaintance. What a mistake that was? Ten days close proximity

with initial strangers rapidly changes those first perceptions. For instance, the bloke with the base ball cap on back to front, sporting a crew cut and an apparent malevolent demeanour, wasn't the yob I thought he was. He turned out to be a charming Justice Of The Peace and UK fencing champion. (I believe the two activities are not linked). Then there was the portly and I supposed rather boring older chap whom I later discovered was a zoo vet (of television fame), a

(Continued on page 31)

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(Continued from page 30)

great story teller and somebody with whom I spent many happy hours pedalling through the heat of India. And so my misconceptions multiplied, almost everyone I pigeon holed on that first meeting turned out to be a very different person. I hope I'll learn my lesson.

We arrived exhausted in Delhi where we were met by our Indian guides, Almas and Bhawani: the adventure had begun.

Of course there was culture shock, poverty, squalor, the stench of open sewers and a man lying dead on the pavement ignored by passers by. I found the way to deal with this assault to the senses was to become detached, a remote bystander. In this way I found it all fascinating and not disturbing. A day's site-seeing in Delhi, a night in a cheap and pretty cheerless hotel and off at dawn by bus to Jaipur.

A crazy seven hour journey through thick mist, horns blaring, (the louder and more bizarre the noise the better) and absolutely no road sense whatsoever. I counted nine car and lorry crashes on the way, none of which slowed our driver's reckless passage. Finally we arrived at the Amber Fort on the outskirts of the Pink City (Jaipur) and visited the hill fort on elephant back, a wonderful and peaceful palace and temple complex dating back to the year 1600, all in good repair. The arid climate seems to be kind to so many of the temples and palaces of India.

After a night in a hotel..... "the bikes." Another dawn start and after minor adjustments to our trusty mounts we were off for real. Once out of the city we could start to relax. Soon we were in the countryside, enjoying the sight of camels, ele-

phant, water buffalo and the ever present cows. By mid day it became apparent that the locals we were passing found us fascinating. Our guides told us that most had rarely seen white men and never on bikes: we were privileged to pass through this unspoilt land.

In Delhi and Jaipur we had seen beggars everywhere, yet here in the country there was no begging, many smiling faces and a lot of genuine happiness. How easily that can all be spoilt. It would be so easy to ruin the simplicity and apparent contentment of the

wild dogs, unidentified snarls, howls and screeches.

A good nights sleep was followed by another days cycling over rutted dirt tracks and pot holes. After many hours in the saddle the bumps took their toll. I was loving the whole experience, unfortunately my bottom was not.

The following morning I had to see the team Doc, a charming Indian gentleman with a gentle bedside manner. I asked him for something to ease my pain and a beatific smile crossed his benign face. He had just the thing! He offered me a can of Bot-

tyeaze or some such name. I discretely dropped my trousers and sprayed myself. A second or two passed as I eagerly anticipated the healing balm taking effect and then I hit the roof. The pain was so intense that I swear it would have given me greater pleasure to squat over a bunsen burner for five minutes. The Doc was the devil incarnate - another useful

lesson, don't be fooled by appearances.

The next day brought various adventures and near misses with the infrequent lorries and their quite barmy drivers; lunch in a tiger reserve, meetings with the locals and then on to camp.

We seemed to have achieved star status, locals from miles around surrounded the camp giggling at us as we stripped off to wash, following us as we answered the call of nature, privacy was not high on the agenda.

The third day's ride was the hardest, temperatures over 100 degrees, hilly dusty roads and the odd mishap - what a great sense of achievement when we arrived in camp!

(Continued on page 32)



End of the road, sore bottom, tired legs but a jubilant Jeremy Symondson at the Taj Mahal museum.

country people by offering sweets or money to these obviously poor folk, but I believe we would have created expectations within them that would have caused them to beg and pester the next foreigners to pass their way.

I was very aware of the unspoilt and fragile environment around me. Later in the trip the results of careless foreign interaction were clear, the demands of many beggars being particularly invasive, their misery obvious.

Our first night's camp like those that followed was spent in two-birth tents in the middle of nowhere. Huge and unfamiliar pitch black skies punctuated by a multitude of stars, strange animal noises,

(Continued from page 31)

By now real friendships amongst the group had been forged, anyone who found the going tough was encouraged by the others, a degree of adversity amongst recent strangers quickly built team spirit and brought out the very best in most of us.

More illusions shattered! At Heathrow I had summed up three of the group as "the ladies who lunch," twin set and pearls brigade. In real life far from it! The ladies who don't give up and are jolly good

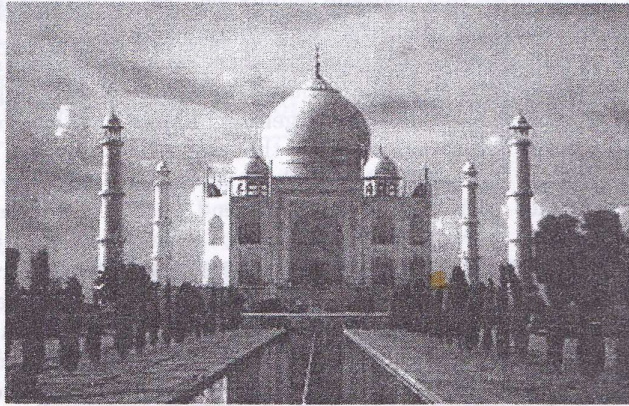
eggs is nearer the mark. One of them took a real hard tumble, bloodied, bruised but unbowed, she remounted her bike without a word of complaint. Mind you, God help Waitrose if they run out of lobster tails.

Day four and one of the real highlights for me, lunch time and a visit to Keoladeo Bird and Animal Sanctuary near Bharatpur. Literally thousands of eagrets of various kinds, painted stork, snake birds, kingfishers, eagles and an assortment of snakes, turtles and deer all inhabit thousands of acres of fresh water swamp created by the Maharaja of Bharatpur during the last century.

I had a chance to shine, confidently identifying assorted exotic birds which greatly impressed my companions, (I had secreted about my person a book of Indian birds lent to me by Pete Symonds - thanks Pete!) Actually my fellow travellers probably thought I was a dreadful show off, which of course I am. Keoladeo is said to be one of the finest bird reserves in the world and I count myself lucky to have visited it.

We left the reserve and continued on to Fatehpur Sikri (The Royal Ghost City) and our third night's camp.

Five thirty morning call, wash and off to enjoy sunrise



Journey's end. The Taj Mahal, Agra. "Better than Alton Towers!"

over Fatehpur Sikri. The now deserted city is over four hundred years old and yet perfectly preserved, the whole complex of palaces and temples spread over hundreds of acres. With no other visitors, this was yet another wonderful experience. Leaving Fatehpur Sikri we were off on the final push to Agra and our destination, the Taj Mahal. Like all the other days, this one was full of adventure. An unending and close packed stream of Hindu pilgrims were walking in the opposite direction. Most were bare foot and dressed in rags, their destination was a temple more than 150 miles away.

There seemed to be a violent fundamentalist element to this group, some of whom threw stones and tried to knock us off our bikes, presumably we were the wrong colour or religion, probably both. Until then the reaction to us had been exceptionally warm and friendly, the locals pleased to meet greet and welcome us.

After forty miles we arrived in Agra, traffic coming at us from all directions, the pil-

grims still much in evidence walking in the other direction. Motorised rickshaws, pedal rickshaws, lorries, busses, camels, cows, and humanity all tried their hardest to hinder our way. A motor scooter crashed into me, one of the mad Irishman collided with an ancient car but we all carried on regardless through the turmoil.

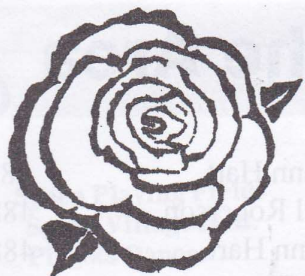
A banner over our heads proclaimed "Go Whizz Kidz only 5km. to go", a strangely emotional moment. Before we knew it we were at the gates of the Taj Mahal, the challenge over. Tears hugs and kisses.

The last morning we arose pre-dawn to visit the Taj Mahal, truly one of the wonders of the world. Only a visit can do it justice, words cannot convey the beauty, romance and magic of the building, if you haven't had the good fortune to see it yet, do try to, I reckon it's better than Alton Towers.

On the day I returned to England the front page of the Sunday paper featured a story about Jeffrey Archer's 20-something son suing his money-broking employers for £650,000 loss of commission following his redundancy. Is the world barmy or is it just me?

A very sincere thank you to all who contributed so generously to the Whizz Kidz Challenge. I am sorry I could not thank more of you in person. My trip was one of four held on successive weeks, our combined efforts raised an incredible half million pounds helping hundreds of children to become mobile. In a couple of weeks I will be meeting some of those children.

Jeremy Symondson



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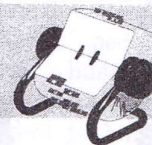
Work providers to Hampden Hall Horticultural College
References available.

CHILTERN MEADOWS

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"Our Business is Growing"

Who's Who, In The Area



Speen & North Dean News Editor
 Speen Residents Association
 Speen W.I.
 Speen Horticultural Society
 Speen Playing Field Association
 Riding for the Disabled
 Village Hall Committee, Speen
 Village Hall Committee, N.D.
 Speen Pre-school
 Speen School PTA
 Speen Tennis Court
 Speen Millenium Project
 Guides
 The Youth Group
 Baptist Church
 Speen/N.D. Good Neighbours
 Mother and Toddler Club
 Neighbourhood Watch

Glenn Hart 488528
 Paul Rogerson 488315
 Glenn Hart 488528
 Ted Drew 488738
 Phyllis Harris 488734
 Gloria Holmes 488420
 Catherine Butler 488412
 Megan Chinn 563074
 Kay Morgan 564825
 Peter Symonds 488016
 Cherry Seekins 488355
 Martin Stockley 488101
 Pauline Hall 488372
 Rob Lenko 488337
 Andy Gower 488758
 Margaret Jones 488246
 Caroline Crossley 488203
 John Radford 488679



Lost and Found!

Ninety two bags of "Plumes de Canard." Here's one driver who found recently that it doesn't pay to get lost with his juggernaut in these parts! The French driver badly needed help! Firstly, to find out where he really wanted to be – he had gone to a private address by mistake – and then to get out of the other predicament he found himself in, our narrow lanes!

Remember!

The next edition of Speen & North Dean News is the "Winter" edition.

**COPY DATE FOR THIS EDITION IS:
 21st SEPTEMBER!**

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WHAT'S ON? - In Speen & North Dean



June.

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|--|
| 13 th | Speen Playing Fields | Fun Day. |
| 19 th | Speen Village Hall. | Men's Breakfast. |
| 19 th | Piggots Dance. | Phone: Nick Wheeler-Robinson for details and tickets. on 562167. |
| 27 th | North Dean B.B.Q. | 12:30 pm. Tickets: John Rogers on 562041. |
| 27 th | Concert: Mozart | 7:48 am Clarinet Quintet, followed by Piggots Breakfast. Phone: Nick Wheeler-Robinson 562167 |

July.

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|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1 st | Speen Village Hall | WI Ramble round the Village and Quiz. |
| 1 st | Chapel Hall | 7:00pm, Prizes for Fete. We need you! |
| 3 rd | Speen School Grounds. | Black & White Ball II. Some like it even Hotter. 7:30pm. |
| 8 th | Speen Playing Field. | Pageant, "The Leaves of Time." |
| 9 th | Speen Playing Field. | Pageant, "The Leaves of Time." |
| 10 th | Speen Playing Field. | Pageant, "The Leaves of Time." |
| 10 th | Speen Playing Field. | Speen Fete, and "The Leaves of Time." |
| 10 th | Speen Village Hall. | Art Exhibition 2:00pm |
| 12 th | Speen Village Hall. | CHAPEL - Now to live the life! |
| 19 th | Speen Village Hall. | CHAPEL - Now to live the life! |

August

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 5 th | Speen Village Hall. | W.I. Healthy Eating. |
| 5 th & 6 th | | North Dean Village collection for bric-a-brac urgently required & offers of help for fete. Please phone: John Rogers on 562041 or Megan Chinn on 563074 |
| 7 th | N'th Dean Village Fete. | On the Playing Field at 2pm. All welcome. |
| 13 th | Speen Village Hall. | Parish Council Meeting 7:30pm |
| 21 st | Speen Village Walk. | Meet at the Chapel at 1:45pm. Pre-booking requested. Bob 488593. Cream tea included. |
| 25 th | Speen Village Hall. | Seniors Lunch. |

September

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| 2 nd | Speen Village Hall | W.I. Line Dancing. |
| 11 th | Hampden Village Hall. | French theme evening. |
| 26 th | Speen Village Walk. | Meet at the Chapel at 1:45pm. Pre-booking requested. Bob 488593. Cream tea included. |

October

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|------------------|---------------------|---|
| 2 nd | Speen Village Hall. | Men's Breakfast. |
| 7 th | Speen Village Hall. | W.I. Rendezvous in Russia. |
| 9 th | Speen Village Walk. | Meet at the Chapel at 1:45pm. Pre-booking requested. Bob on 488593. Cream tea included. |
| 12 th | Speen Village Hall. | Parish Council Meeting 7:30pm |
| 15 th | Speen Village Hall. | Village Quiz. |

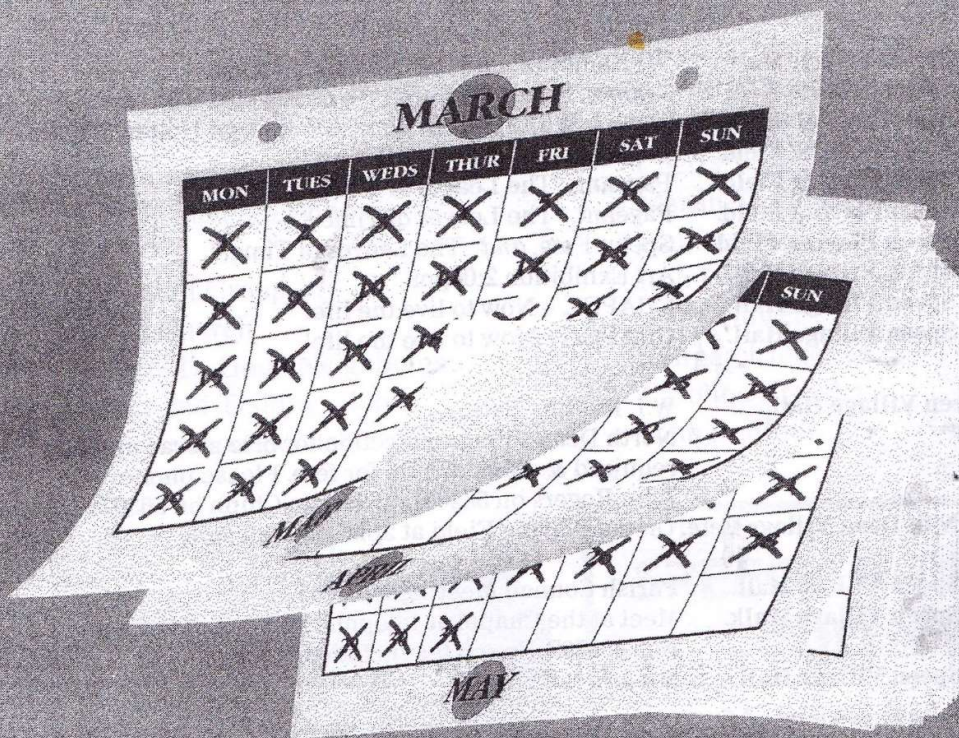
Please remember, copy date for the "Winter" edition is: 21st September!

Philip

Green

& Partners

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