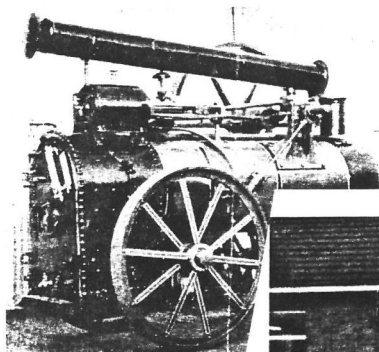


A VILLAGE ACHIEVEMENT

SEEND 1969 TRACTION ENGINE RALLY



SATURDAY
26th and 27
CRAYSMARSH

BY KIND PERMISSION
IN AID OF SEEND LYE

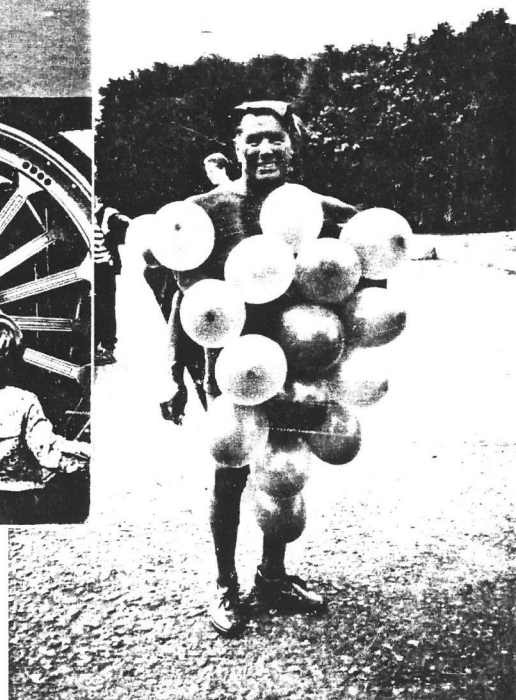
PROGRAMME 16



SEEND 1972 TRACTION ENGINE RALLY

CRAYSMARSH FARM, SEEND JULY 29-30

Programme
10p



A. Hutch.

A VILLAGE ACHIEVEMENT

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Researched and Written by
JOHN S. SMALLSHAW

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A VILLAGE ACHIEVEMENT

Seend lies astride the A361, some four miles from Devizes in Wiltshire. Also, within the Parish of Seend are the villages of Seend Cleeve and Sells Green, with the latter straddling the A365.

In 1965 the electoral roll stood at around 850 people of voting age, and it was to this parish that the Reverend Ken Brown came to take up the role of Vicar.

Ken saw a need for some form of written communication within the parish, and as a result, the parish magazine 'Spotlight' was launched in 1966. He recalls that in one of his parish letters, he commented to the effect that in some ways, country children were disadvantaged against children in urban areas. In the towns there would be playing fields and open spaces, but whilst a rural area had plenty of open spaces, access would be limited mainly to footpaths. The village children really needed an open space where they could run and play in complete freedom.

Ken may not have been aware that he was going over old ground. In 1962 there had been local arguments about litter being thrown around the village, and the blame had been levelled at the children. One reported view was that adults were as untidy as the children, and that litter bins should be provided. Parish Councillor Jim Abbott's views were forthright and he would put the children into the bins with the litter!

Problems were still to the fore when in 1967 there was friction with one or two people who lived in The Lye Estate. There was a largish number of young boys, and the small area of grass in the middle of the housing area was insufficient for any vigorous activities. The outcome was that there were problems with balls going into residents' gardens. A football belonging to Ian Giddings was kicked into the garden of one particular lady, and Ian crept in through the gate, hoping to recover his ball before it was seen. He was too late. She came out, scooped up the ball, and despite Ian's pleas, refused to give it to him. Ian went home to find his father, and Bill, apologising for any nuisance his son may have caused, also asked for the ball. She refused! Ian then went to see P.c. Scott who in due course asked for the ball. Again she refused and Ian had to wait several days before his cherished ball was returned to his possession.

The field immediately to the west of the Lye Estate was farmed by Mr. W. Smith, who was a tenant of the Weld-Smith's from the Manor House on the south side of the High Street. Over the years the field has been used as the site for small country shows, and although children did go on to the field, it was part of a working farm and there were limitations on what the children could reasonably do. Grass was taken for hay-making, and the area was also used for grazing.

SEEND

Youngsters with nowhere to go: P.C. to rescue

The children of Seend, who through no fault of their own, have lately been in the news because there was nowhere to go in the village, have found a friend in the person of Police Constable D. Perry who realises the need of the children to have amusement and social evenings provided for them. He is determined to help them.

On Thursday evening last week the constable asked them to meet him at the Women's Institute Hall and 35 accepted the invitation, their ages ranging from 12 to 17.

With the assistance of Mr. I. G. Hopkins, Mrs. T. Wareham, Mrs. Vowles, and Mr. R. Alexander, the constable arranged a happy evening. After a talk, a film show was given by Mr. Hopkins on his travels in Switzerland, and this was followed by games which included darts and table tennis, ending with dancing to music by a record player.

LITTER AT LYE CORNER

Would a Bin Stay There ?

Children were blamed at Monday's Seend Parish Council meeting for the litter at the junction of The Lye with the main Devizes to Trowbridge road. It was decided to place suitable litter bins there.

Mr. Jim Abbott didn't think a litter bin would stay there five minutes. "You want one down there weighing three tons and I still guarantee it would get moved," he said, describing the area as "disgusting."

Mrs. Marjorie Noad commented: "I can't bear to see the children hanging around that corner with nothing else to do. It is the worst place in the village. As far as a litter bin is concerned I don't know whether it will be used."

She added that she would not mind giving a boy or girl two shillings a week to get the litter cleared from the corner.

The Council decided to ask the Post Office to consider resiting the telephone kiosk along The Lye. Mr. E. Ransted (chairman) commenting that it was undoubtedly the biggest centre of population in the village.

"But please don't put it on the corner," pleaded Mr. Abbott.

SEEND

'Put kids in bin along with the litter'

After discussing the question of litter left lying about at the junction of The Lye and the main Devizes to Trowbridge road, members of Seend Parish Council on Monday decided to send for catalogues of suitable litter bins. Before they reached their decision, Mrs. Noad and Mr. Jim Abbott told the meeting what they thought about the youth of the area.

"I cannot bear to see the children hanging around that corner with nothing else to do. It is the worst place in the village. As far as a litter bin is concerned, I don't know whether it will be used," Mrs. Noad said.

Mr. Abbott said he didn't think a litter bin would stay there five minutes. The area was "disgusting," he said. He added, "I would like to put all the kids in the bin along with the litter."

TELEPHONE KIOSK

Discussing the type of bin, Mr. Abbott said, "You want one down there weighing three tons, and I still guarantee it would get moved."

Mrs. Noad said she wouldn't mind giving a boy or a girl two shillings a week to get the litter cleared from the corner.

The council also decided to contact the G.P.O., asking them to consider re-siting the village telephone kiosk along The Lye. Mr. E. Ranstead, the chairman, said that undoubtedly the biggest concentration of the village population resided in The Lye area.

The council is asking that it be sited near the traffic pull-in half-way along The Lye. "Please don't put it on the corner," Mr. Abbott pleaded.

Within the field were several trees, with one of them being hollow. Suddenly, one day, this hollow tree burst into flames and furthermore, it continued to burn slowly for nearly a week. It was a mystery as to who, or what, had caused the fire, but over a quarter of a century later, John Nichols owned up. He and Billy Law had been up the tree trying to look inside the hollow trunk, and to help them to see, they had been using matches. When they left the tree they were unaware of any problems, but clearly, one of the matches had started a small blaze and when they saw the tree sometime later, it was well and truly alight. At the time, the two lads were afraid to say anything.

Incidents such as these stirred people into action. Following the reports of the Councillors' deliberations in 1962, young teenager Sue Vowles went around the houses in The Lye collecting signatures calling for a playing field in the village. Later in 1966 following the arguments over the football, her mother, Betty Vowles, and May Giddings started to work. They prepared a petition calling upon what was then the Devizes Rural District Council to provide a suitable play area for the children of Seend, and then set about collecting signatures. This work could only be done in the evenings. They could not start before their menfolk had returned from work and had been fed, and they also had to prepare the children for their beds. Thus, it would be approaching darkness when they set out, and it would be dark before they returned home. For their journey on the first evening they travelled by bicycle. It must be pointed out that they only had one bicycle between the, and they tried to make their way around with one riding and pedalling, and one sitting on the rear carrier over the back mudguard. There is no record of how many times they wobbled off, but suffice to say, they had major difficulties and after that first night, they travelled on foot.

The two ladies worked steadily through some three weeks or so during April and May, 1966, and obtained signatures from almost every household in the parish. The petition was duly presented to Mr. Spencer, Clerk to Devizes Rural District Council, who received it sympathetically.

Between the handing in of the petition and October, 1966 two events occurred. Firstly, a proposal to build a road by-passing Seend was announced by Wiltshire County Council, and a probable route would run immediately to the north of The Lye Estate. Secondly, Mrs. Gibb, nee Weld-Smith, wanted to sell the field worked by tenant farmer Mr. W. Smith immediately to the west of The Lye Estate, and furthermore, she wanted to sell it for housing development.

Both issues were viewed by residents with both alarm and anxiety. The proposed new road would run within feet of the village school immediately behind The Lye houses.

SEEND YOUNGSTERS PETITION PARISH COUNCIL FOR AMENITIES

'WE MAY GET SUPPORT NOW,' SAYS CHAIRMAN

PEOPLE living in the council housing estate at The Lye, Seend—the biggest centre of population in the village—are upset at remarks made at a recent Parish Council meeting about children congregating on the estate junction with the main road and throwing litter around the area.

So incensed were the youngsters living on the estate that they signed a petition which was posted to Mr. E. F. Ransted, the Parish Council chairman, registering a protest and calling for the provision of more facilities for the youth of the village.

The petition was organised by 13-year-old Susan Vowles, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Vowles, of 22 The Lye, and bore 46 names of children of school age upwards living in the 52 houses at The Lye.

PLAYFIELD NEEDED

Susan is a member of Seend Parish Church choir and the Girl Guides, but her mother told a Gazette and Herald reporter that there were insufficient facilities for the youth of the village to occupy their time.

"What they want most urgently is a good playing field," she stated, pointing to the small open grass space which is obviously inadequate for an estate the size of The Lye.

Mr. W. J. Woodruff, of 17 The Lye, said it was not children alone who were responsible for the litter. A lot of the litter was thrown down by people getting on and off the buses.

"I don't think that the children are causing any harm sitting up at the estate entrance on the wall," commented Mrs. V. Haines of 10 The Lye. "And I don't think they are responsible for half the litter there."

Mrs. T. W. Errington, of 31 The Lye, thought that the complaint about the litter had been used to criticise the behaviour of the children at the estate entrance.

SITE PROBLEM

Several villagers thought that a prime necessity was a good youth club and a suitable playing field. Last winter the youth club was unable to function because of repairs to the Workmen's Club.

Mr. Ransted said the petition would be discussed by the Council at its next meeting.

When the Parish Council had attempted to introduce more facilities for the youth of the village in the past it had not got the desired support, he said. He also criticised the absence of villagers from the annual parish meetings when such matters could be raised.

"Another trouble is that Seend is such a scattered village, and one of the difficulties about providing a playing field is to find an ideal site for it," he said.

"But I feel that this petition might produce the desired result. We may now get the support needed to provide these facilities."

"It is also unfortunate that the more elderly people in the estate live near the entrance and probably don't like the noise of children playing just there," he stated.

As an aside, the village could not agree on what might be an acceptable route for a by-pass, and eventually, the County Council withdrew the proposal.

There was, however, a general agreement that housing development was not wanted. People living in the houses on the south side of the A361 had good views stretching away to the north. Also, development in that particular area would fill the open space in the middle of the village, and that, of course, would take away the possibility of a playing field which would be easily accessible to village people.

As a consequence of these apprehensions, a group of more affluent people met and agreed that if the village would be prepared to buy the field, they would underwrite the necessary loan. On 27th October, 1966 a group of people, now known as the Playing Field Committee met with Mr. Spencer at Devizes R.D.C. offices, and discussed how the field might be acquired and funded. Subsequent to this meeting, an offer was made to Mrs. Gibb. It was for £5,500 and was for the five and a half acre field immediately adjacent to the west of The Lye Estate. The offer was received without commitment.

It was necessary then to determine the level of support from the parish, and the January, 1967 edition of Spotlight carried a note inviting everybody to attend a public meeting. It would be held in The Women's Institute Hall on 25th January, 1967 and the subject for discussion would be a playing field for the parish.

The minutes show that 118 people attended, plus one member from the press. Mr. Archie Kidd was appointed chairman of the meeting. There was a clear support to go ahead with the purchase, and the chairman explained what had been learnt about funding such a venture. Should the field be purchased for the parish by Seend Parish Council, the maximum grant available would be 50% of the cost. If, on the other hand, the field was purchased by a Voluntary Committee representing the village, grants of 75% could be obtained. These would be 50% from Wiltshire County Council, and 25% from the Playing Fields Association. It was agreed that a Voluntary Committee comprising Mr. A. Kidd, Chairman, Miss Usher, Mrs. Giddings, Mrs. Vowles, Reverend K. Brown and Messrs. Awdry, Clarke, Frazer, Newman, Ranstead and Wiltshire should be appointed. The committee was empowered to negotiate for the land. This committee met on a regular basis and outline plans for a playing field were prepared.

Mr. Kidd remembers that every time he met Mrs. Diana Fraser she asked him if he thought she would live enough to see the field bought and paid for.

THE LYE FIELD: PUBLIC MEETING

W. I. HALL WEDNESDAY, JAN 25th

at 7.30 p.m.

A number of people have for some years been concerned that the Lye Field should be preserved as an open space for the village, for use as a playing and recreation field, and as a venue for any suitable outdoor village event or function. It is uniquely suitable. There is no other alternative.

Accordingly, acting under the Chairmanship of Mr A.W.Kidd, a voluntary Committee has been working for some time; and at a meeting on 27th October last, convened by Mr John Spencer, Clerk of the Devizes R.D.C., the Rev. K. Brown, Mr L.P.Roberts, Mr Alan Clark and Mr A.W.Kidd made the owner, Mrs S.Gibb an offer of £5,500 for the 5½ acres lying between the Street and the proposed bye-pass. However, it is understood that Mrs Gibb has now put in three planning applications to the R.D.C. putting forward alternative building propositions for the land in question.

The Committee believes there will be overwhelming public support for its work, and equal opposition to any building scheme on what they believe to be an irreplaceable piece of land.

The Committee also feels the need to be democratically founded on the basis of a PUBLIC MEETING, and it has therefore been decided to hold such a meeting at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan 25th.

As a matter of information, those who have attended meetings of the voluntary Committee include Mr R.Hughes, Mr P.Awdrey, Mr S.Wiltshire (representing the Cricket Club), Mr R.Newman (representing the Football Club), Miss I.Usher, Mr E.Ranstad (Chairman of the Parish Council, as well as those mentioned above. Mrs H.A.Hyde has agreed to act as Secretary.

PLEASE BE SURE TO ATTEND THIS MEETING, WHICH MAY BE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE FUTURE OF OUR VILLAGE.

A.W.K.

A photograph of a page taken from the January, 1967 edition of Spotlight inviting residents to the public meeting.

There was also some dissension in the parish. It would be alright having a playing field, but some people in Seend Cleeve were making the point that theirs was the biggest village and anyway, the football and cricket teams had always played their games on fields in the Cleeve area. Some people in Sells Green said that a playing field in Seend Cleeve, or even Seend for that matter, would be too far from Sells Green, and that any village field should be nearer to them.

At the meeting of the Playing Field Committee on 17th February, 1967 there were strong anxieties and doubts about both the future and the value of the land. The field was within the area of the Seend Control Map, and there was the possibility that if permission for building was refused, the R.D.C., might have to buy it at development price. It was agreed that in order to try to push the matter along, Miss Usher should see Mrs. Gibb and repeat the offer of £5,500.

Events overtook the need for such a meeting. The need disappeared because by 13th March, Mrs. Gibb's solicitor had written asking if the offer of £5,500 was still open, and if so, whether the purchase could be completed by 5th April 1967. The letter pointed out that a tithe of £3.3s.8d., was payable on the land, and that the land was subject to a tenancy agreement.

The reason behind the sudden movement lay in a new piece of legislation which was due to be enacted on 6th April, 1967. This would require anybody selling land for development purposes on or after that date, to pay the Government a tax of 40% of the money realised. Of course, by selling before this date, Mrs. Gibb would avoid having to pay such a tax.

The offer was confirmed and accepted. The village now owned the Lye Field.

The Committee acted swiftly and in a most business like manner.

Walter Ireland of Messrs. Wansboroughs of Devizes was appointed solicitor.

Barclays Bank agreed a loan of £5,500, and this sum was guaranteed by Miss Usher and Mr. Kidd. A deposit of 20% would be paid upon exchange of documents.

Trustees were appointed. These were the Chairman Mr. A. Kidd, the Treasurer Mr. J. Fraser and the Secretary Mrs. H. Hyde. Additionally there were the Reverend K. Brown and Mr. Ranstead in his capacity as Chairman of the Parish Council.

It was assessed that the total costs of purchasing and also preparing the Lye Field as a recreation ground would amount to around £8,000. Thus, a 75% grant would leave some £2,000 to be raised by the village. Draw tickets would be sold for the Derby horse race. Jack Holloway offered to organise a traction engine rally and it was thought that a date in August would be suitable.

With a view to increasing the size of the Committee, it was decided to approach the existing organisations within the Parish, asking them to nominate one representative to serve on the committee. The organisations were the Royal British Legion, Women's Institute, Working Men's' Club, Tennis Club, 60+ Club, Scouts, Guides, Parochial Church Council and the Methodist Chapel. The Cricket and Football Clubs were each asked to nominate two representatives.

To reduce bank interest charges, it was agreed to approach interested parties in the village seeking interest-free loans for a period of one year. It was hoped that this would raise around £3,000, but the Treasurer felt that wider attempts should be made. It was agreed that Spotlight would carry an appeal asking for free loans of any amount for a period not exceeding one year.

Two sub-committees were established, Messrs. Kidd, Fraser, Amor, Williams and Wiltshire would plan the development of the field.

Messrs. Clarke, Fraser, Amor and Hand would plan the Traction Engine rally and the Flower Show. Mr. Adam Kidd, Mr. Holloway and Captain Haynes were co-opted onto the committee. At their first meeting they realised that to organise such an event would be a major undertaking and could not be done satisfactorily in the time available to them. It was agreed that the first Traction Engine rally would be held the following year, 1968.

However, progress continued in other areas. The title deeds were deposited in Barclays Bank, and the field was appropriately insured.

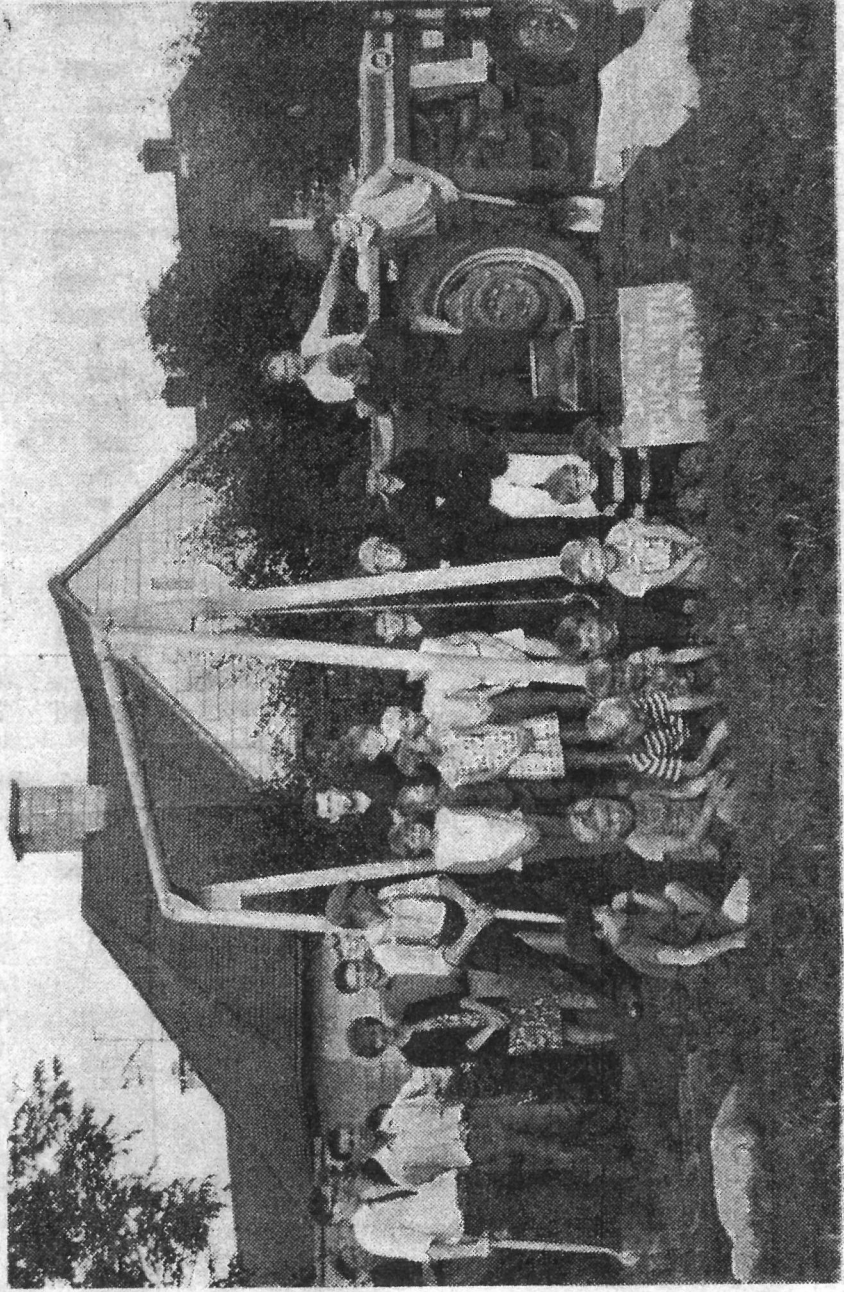
Despite a lack of support for the Treasurer's general appeal for interest-free loans, by the end of May, 1967, a number of interested parties had loaned £3,520. The Derby Draw had produced a profit of £29.10s.2d. (£29.51).

Formal planning permission approving a change of use from agricultural purposes to a playing field was granted by Devizes R.D.C., and on Monday 31st July, 1967 a working party met to erect the goal posts and swings. Later plans included the provision of a tackle shed with the appropriate equipment, a hard tennis court and a pavilion. There were also plans for a swimming pool, but this did not materialise.

TIMES & NEWS FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29th, 1967

Trek In Europe

Volunteers Busy At Seend



SEEND PLAYING FIELD: Volunteers at work last week on erecting the first swings for children on the new playing field at the Lye, Seend; in the picture are Mr. Adam Kidd, Mr. Joe Burbidge, Mr. Jack Holloway, the Vicar (Rev. K. Brown), Mr. Ivan Akerman and Mr. Williams.

Despite the high levels of support and energy from many people, there were some dissenters. The swings which had been erected along the eastern boundary of the field were close to some of the houses in The Lye and a few complaints were voiced. When the children were playing and enjoying themselves, they made a lot of noise and, furthermore, the swings squeaked! These comments were politely heard. No action was taken and the complaints disappeared.

Fund raising, that seemingly endless task in most stratas of society, continued. A beech tree in the centre of the field was removed, cut up, and sold off as logs. An evening of skittles at The Barge produced £20.1s.0d. (£20.05). A Whist Drive raised £8.11s.6d. and a Guy Fawkes Bonfire had raised £4.10s.9½d. Two thousand tickets were printed for a Grand Christmas Draw. Formal applications were made seeking grants from Wiltshire County Council and from the Playing Fields Association, but it would appear that little really changes over the years. The grant applications were formally acknowledged but due to the economic situation of the day, funds were short and it would take time before the applications could be considered. The Tithe was redeemed by The Tithe Redemption Committee for the sum of £20.13s.0d.

The first Annual General Meeting was held in The Women's Institute on 1st March, 1968. Everybody involved had good reason for self-satisfaction. The field had been purchased, a successful and achieving administration was in place, a range of activities were proceeding, and the Seend Lye Recreation Field was gently taking shape. Accounts for the first year show that loans to be repaid, bank overdrafts and sundry creditors, amounted to the total debt of £3,451.13s.4d.

Whilst all of the field work was taking place, the Traction Engine Rally Committee had also been working hard, and the most significant aspect about this project was its sheer enormity. It was perhaps a good thing that those involved were inexperienced and unaware of what they were taking on, because the size of the task was simply immense.

A brief look at the initial planning gives an indication of what was involved: The Rally would be held in Mr. John Cottle's field at Redstocks on Saturday and Sunday, 27th and 28th July, 1968. The minutes show that various individuals were made responsible for specific arrangements:

Publicity.

Selling of Programmes.

Fuel for traction engines.

Car Parking.

Main Gate-pedestrians.



Mr. Adam Kidd.

Mr. P. Amor and

Mr. S. Wiltshire.

Mr. B. Coombes.

Field Squad. (Cleaning, Layout, etc.)	Mr. B. Williams.
Security.	Mr. R. Rose.
Ring Wardens.	Mr. M. Baker.
Model Tent.	Mr. S. Heavisides.
Trailer Rides.	Mr. J. Gooding.
Side Shows.	Mr. Hand.
Skittles.	Mr. I. Akerman.
Balloons.	Mr. J. Keeley.
Treasurer on Field.	Mr. D. Garside.
Commentator.	Mr. P. Barber.
Water Officer.	Mr. M. Boulter.
Fire Officer.	Mr. B. Culverhouse.
Cake Stall.	Mrs. F. Heavisides.
Pre-publicity.	Mrs. M. Giddings and Mrs. B. Vowles.

(This was to include fairground organs in Devizes, Melksham and Trowbridge from 4.30 p.m. until 9.00 p.m. on the evening prior to the Rally commencing).

Pony Rides.	Mrs. S. Cottle.
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It was at this time that Mr. Jamie Fraser resigned as Honorary Treasurer, and Mr. John Hutchinson took over this duty with effect from 1st April, 1968.

Having people in position for the different activities was only the start and the minutes really only hint at the effort that took place. Whilst not in any particular sequence, this work included:

Insuring the event.

Hiring St. John's Ambulance Brigade.

Acquiring tents, chairs, fencing, bus stops, a mobile 500 gallon water tank.

Inspecting the field, and from this inspection, the work and items required included:

Improvements to fencing. (Wire, posts and staples needed).

Chain and padlock for gate on eastern boundary.

The blocking of two footbridges in Redstocks Lane.

Lopping of tree branches across main vehicle entrance.

Provision of 'No-waiting' signs in Redstocks Lane.

Sleepers at the roadside so that the traction engines could get into the field.

The erection of a sleeper bridge into the car-park field.

THE JUNIOR YOUTH CLUB AT THE SECOND TRACTION ENGINE RALLY IN 1969.

Hartwell's Gallopers
from Burford.



Outside the Models
Tent.

With 'The Iron Maiden'
(This machine was used in
the film of the same
name).



Toilets.

A safe for the takings.

Telephone links.

There were many, many more but there are two items that are worth mentioning:

Grass was to be left uncut under the gallopers. The gallopers, of course, are the merry-to-round and people pay to sit on the very splendid wooden horses as they go around and up and down. As some horses would be without riders, and other riders would vary in size and weight, the rotational effort of the merry-go-round would probably be unbalanced. If the grass was short the whole structure would probably move about, but long grass helped to restrain any movements.

Secondly, was the need for a celebrity to open the event. One suggestion was the Duke of Edinburgh but that came to naught. An approach was made, unsuccessfully, to The Lord Taverners. The final, and excellent choice, was Mr. Jim Lewis who was particularly well-known throughout the Traction Engine fraternity.

Preparations continued at an ever increasing pace with more and more village people becoming involved. In the final run up to the event, all of the team leaders and some of their helpers met in the W.I. Hall and had their last briefings.

The first traction engine rally was an outstanding success with some 20,000 people attending over the two days. There are no definitive figures, but a provisional profit of £2,732.19s.8d. was declared, and with entrance charges of 2/6d. (12½p) for adults, 1/- (5p) for children, and 5/- (25p) for cars, the attendance figure is not far out.

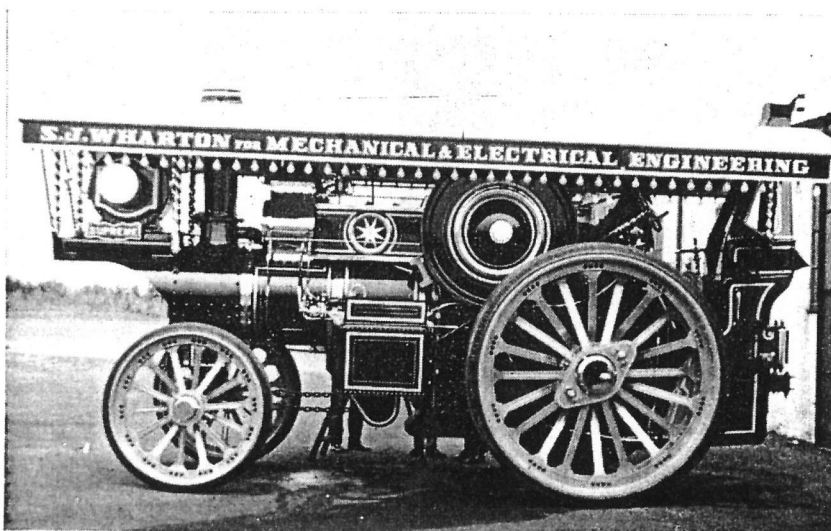
There was a lot for the visitors to see. There were huge showman's tractors, steam rollers, and general purpose steam tractors which were used for haulage, and tractors for threshing and ploughing. Also on view were what had been the lorries of their day, tractors and steam wagons plus a horse drawn, steam, fire engine.

The visitors could see and also listen to the steam powered fairground organs. They could examine vintage cars and vintage farm tractors, look at a wide range of very accurately made working steam models, and enjoy themselves on various fair-ground rides. Additionally they could spend money at the many trade stands or in the refreshment tent.

The programme of events indicates the main activities, but there were also sheep dogs at work, and there were ploughing and saw bench demonstrations with the steam engines.

SEEND 1971 RALLY ENTRIES

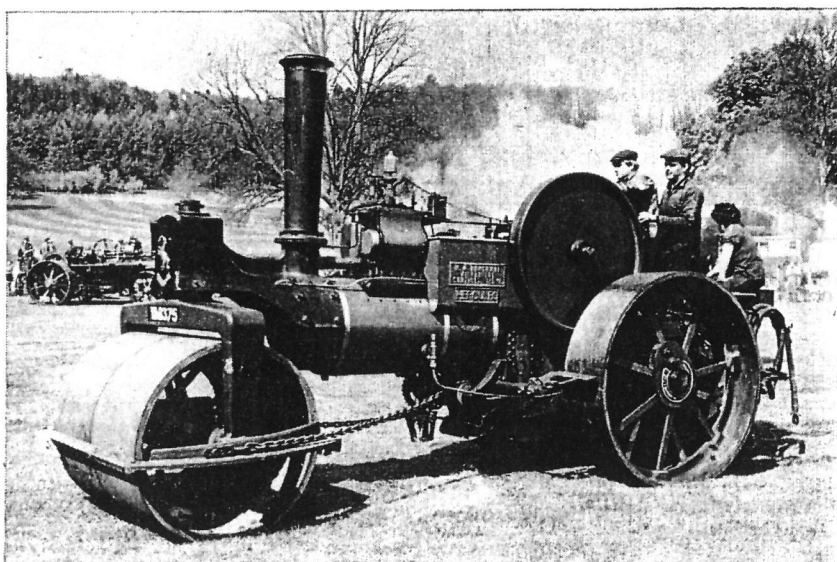
SCENIC SHOWMAN'S ENGINES



1. FOWLER 20223 (1934) "SUPREME"

10 NHP, 22 Tons.

One of the only four B6 'Super Lion' class. The last and finest Showman's Engine which left the works of John Fowler & Co. on the 12th March, 1934. Built to the special order of Mrs. A. Deakin and Sons, Brynmawr, South Wales. Unusual features were the fitting of left hand steering with right hand side reverse, built in crane base and the addition of a separately driven 12 volt dynamo for road lighting, together with chrome fittings in place of the normal brass ones. Power was provided by a 400 amp, 110 volt generator. She was used on the Fairgrounds until 1940 when commandeered for demolition and heavy haulage. Last used commercially for hauling railway locos to the docks, she was bought by Mr. J. B. Lyndhurst, Chichester in 1951, passing to Mr. J. Hardwick, Ewell, Surrey before being purchased in scrap condition by Mr. S. J. Wharton, Minster Lovell, Oxford in 1958. The restoration work by Mr. Wharton has taken 12 years and over 20,000 man hours. Our warmest thanks are extended to Mr. Wharton who wishes that the engine will be used whenever possible to collect money for cancer research.



19. AVELING & PORTER 10594 (1923) "HERCULES"

6 NHP 10 Tons.

This engine was new to W. W. Buncombe of Highbridge, Somerset, and was in use until 1955. Purchased by the present owner in 1967. Owned by Mr. C. Hembury of Beckington, Bath.

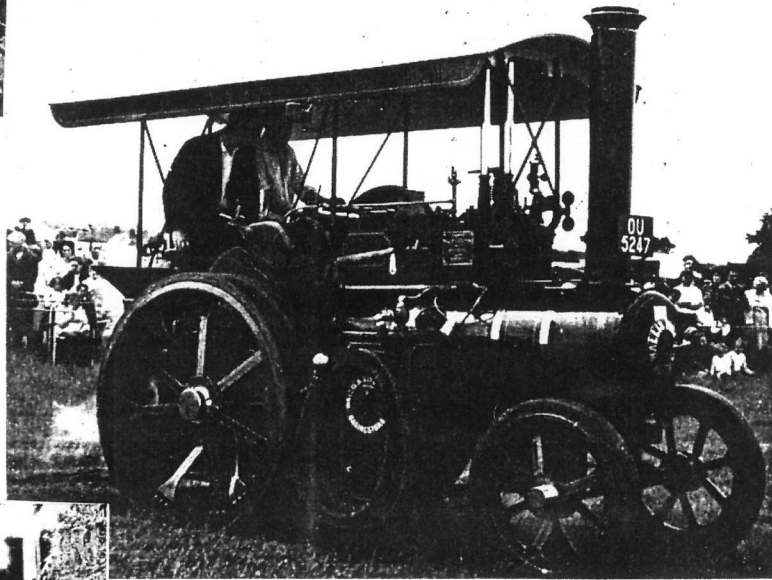
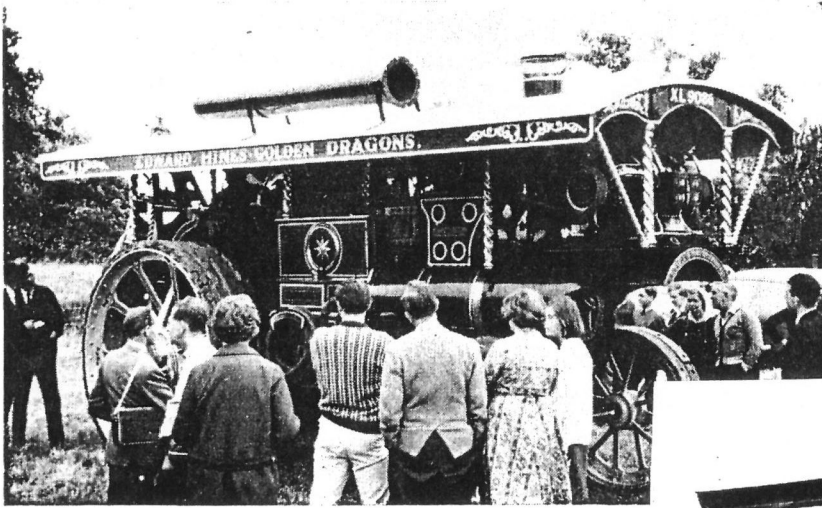
Almost everybody in the village helped in some way, even if it was only to provide a cake to be sold in the refreshment tent. (The minutes of the post-rally review meeting revealed that all cakes sold quickly and that greater quantities would be needed at future rallies. This happened and cake and bread collection points were set up throughout the Parish).

Indeed, further rallies were held over the following four years. They each followed the general format of the first rally and were successful, but not to the level of the first one. The weather was not always kind and after the fifth event it was decided to call it a day. In addition to the huge amount of preparatory work, there was a high level of financial outlay which meant, of course, a high level of risk. Costs had increased and profits had gone down. In 1972, costs for staging the event had reached £8,000 and were projected to be in excess of £9,000 should a further rally be held. Thus 1972 saw the final rally. Over £13,000 was now in hand and this together with cash in hand was sufficient for a pavilion.

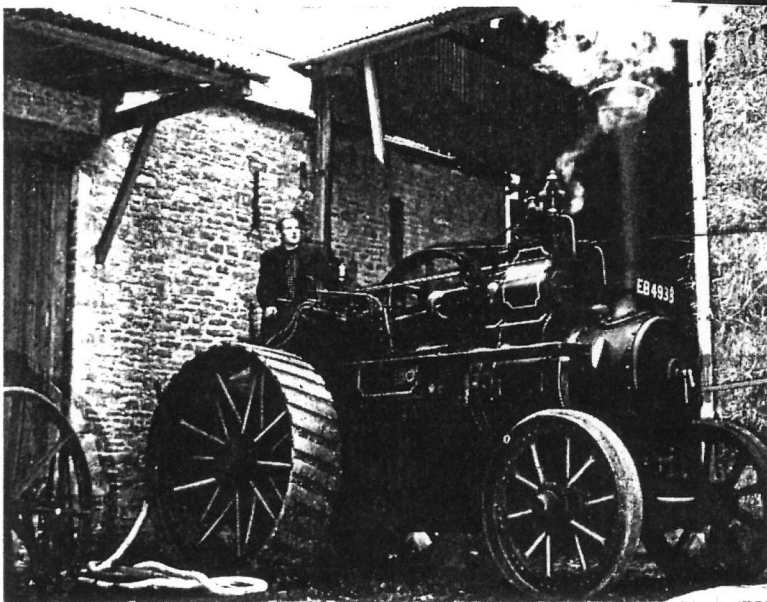
The weather was, as ever, an unknown quantity. Each year there was apprehension that bad weather might prevent Mr. Cottle from cutting the grass and clearing-away manure droppings. In 1968 there were major rainfalls in the area and two weeks before the rally was due, the field was under water. Indeed, the rain was sufficient to cause sixteen bridges to be washed away over the border in Somerset. The next year saw an insurance policy being purchased against rain. The policy was expensive but would pay out if one tenth of an inch or more of rain fell during the event. Mrs. Fraser was the appointed rain gauge monitor and although it rained heavily on the Saturday, and was enough to mar the first day, insufficient water was recorded in the gauge and no pay out was made. The gauge only required more water to about the thickness of a piece of paper for £3,000 insurance to be paid.

Many of the people who were involved have strong and affectionate memories of the rallies, but there is the general consensus that initially, they were, in a way, naive and really took on far more than they had expected.

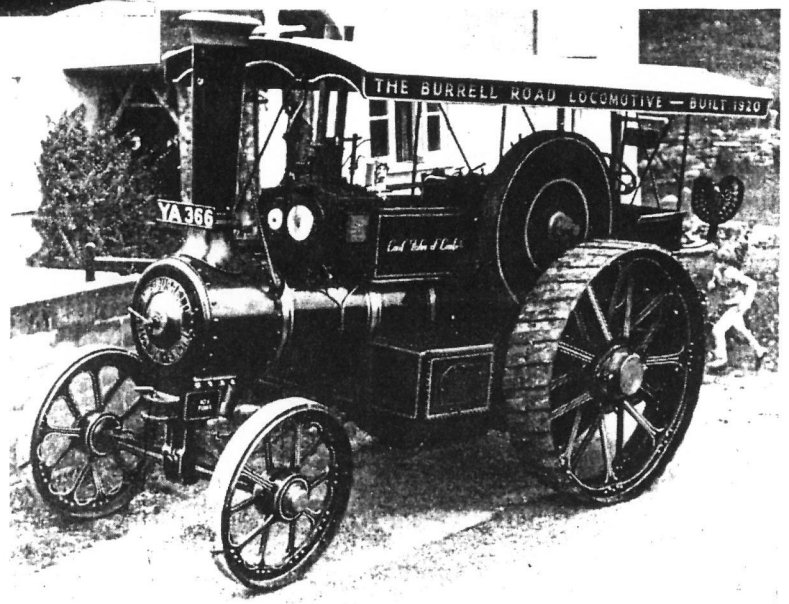
Gerald Muller's notes of his discussions with Jack Holloway show that they anticipated 20,000 attendees, but this was thought by most people to be an unlikely figure. When such numbers actually turned up, they brought with them a number of logistical problems which in some cases, were compounded by organisational inexperience.



Wallis & Stevens Steam Tractor 7872 (page 7).



Allchin Agricultural engine 1652 (page 7).



Burrell Road Locomotive "Lord Fisher" 3824 (page 5).

Car parking was on one side only of the A365. Entrance money was to be collected at the car park gate. Consequently, some half of all drivers had to queue to cross the road, and then queue to pay to enter the field. Traffic built up alarmingly and vehicles were held up from Shaw and Whitley in one direction, and from the outskirts of Devizes from the other. Eventually, a police officer struggled through to the head of the queue and insisted that cars be allowed on to the field without further delay. Walter Mayell was at the gate collecting entrance fees, and remembers great numbers of cars suddenly pouring on the field. He then ran around as quickly as possible trying to get entrance money from the occupants before they could disappear into the crowds. Eric Akerman was surprised by a family who got out of one car. They had been on their way to Weston-Super-Mare for the day and thought the long delay was due to an accident. When the vehicles began to move they further thought the police had opened a diversion and simply followed the cars in front. Somewhat surprised to find themselves in a field, they then stayed and enjoyed the rally.

Parking was to be a problem when the entertainment finished. Some half of the visitors then had to turn across the moving traffic and it took nearly three hours to get the last, and very furious, visitors out of the car park.

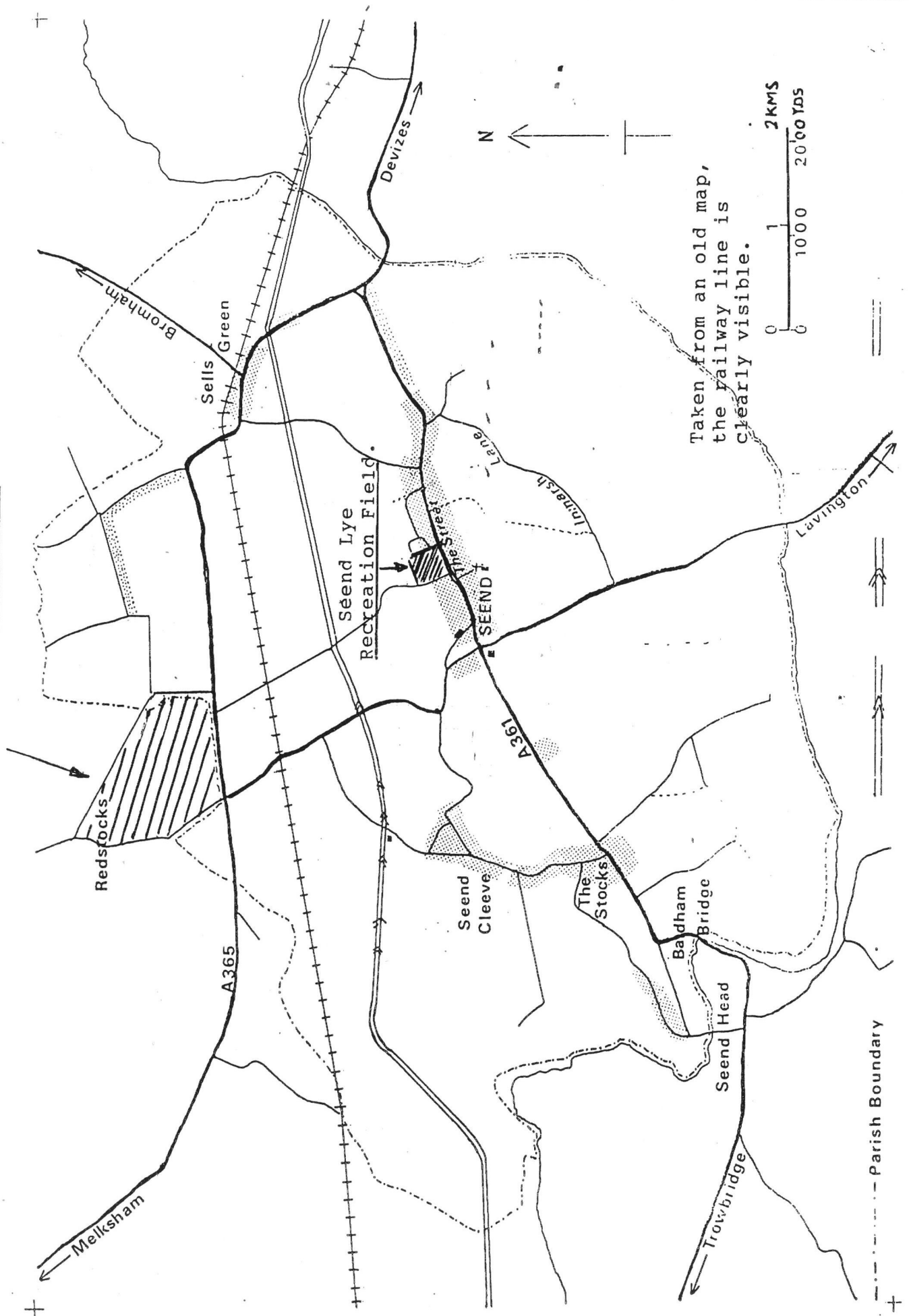
Not everybody came by car and Desmond Edwards and Joy Wellings were detailed to wait by a small gap in the hedge to take money from pedestrians who sought to avoid the main entrance.

During the following years, extra and more readily accessible car parking was provided. Parking was not subject to a charge, and the money was collected in extra entrance fees.

Whilst a lot of people have particular memories about the rallies, they do not always remember which year their recollection took place, but one thing a number of people do recall was the toilet seat incident. Portable toilets had been hired. With such large numbers of people using these lavatories, a lot of cleaning was required from that particular group of cleaners, and somebody was rather too liberal with the bleach! Dennis Brand was the Assistant Treasurer, and during the afternoon heard his name being broadcast over the loud speakers. He was urgently needed with his car. A local lady had sat on the seat, and bleached and burnt her bottom. Dennis had to take her to Melksham Hospital for some minor first-aid treatment.

One year, Dennis forgot to get the bouquet for the lady opening the rally. This was remembered just as the lady had performed the opening ceremony, so Dennis rushed in to the cake tent in the hope of finding some flowers. No flowers were available, so he grabbed a heart-shaped cake which was wrapped in ribbon and foil and presented this in lieu of the bouquet.

SITE OF TRACTION ENGINE RALLIES.



For the first two years, many of the machines steamed to the ground with many of them travelling over long distances. One was actually on the road for two weeks as they travelled from and to Scotland. Joyce and Dennis Brand and their children watched some of them steaming past their house and felt the ground tremble under their weight and momentum. Some of the steam organs were used to give an impromptu exhibition during the evening prior to the rallies when they entertained people in the car part of The Three Magpies. Steaming under their own power was expensive as the Committee had to provide coal as well as other fees. For the last three rallies, a low-loader was used extensively.

On the Sundays of the rallies, a religious service was held. One year the Vicar, then Gregory Page-Turner, preached from the cab of one of the traction engines. He was wearing a near white suit which collected a lot of specks of black soot. The amplification enabled the Vicar to be heard in Seend which is about a mile away on the top of a hill.

During the second rally, a vintage car procession was organised at short notice. The person who was to be the commentator did not arrive and at the very last moment, the Revd. Ken Brown was given the job. Ken had no knowledge at all of old cars and flannelled and stammered at the microphone. His lack of knowledge was clearly apparent to at least the car owners, and one owner held a card for Ken to see. It said 'Rolls Royce, 1911'.

The engines themselves were magnificent pieces of machinery. The May, 1968 edition of 'Spotlight' carried a brief description of one of them. Named 'Quo Vadis' (Whither goeth thou?), it was built by Burrells in 1922. It weighed twenty tons and was made to power a set of Golden Dragons Rodeo Switch-backs. It had been restored in 1958 and at the time of the rallies, powered an 89 key Gavioli organ.

A Mr. Ash of Melksham had made a fine cake model of this engine, and the cake was part of a raffle. It was won by a lady from Derry Hill who sadly was confined to a wheel chair. On her way back home, the icing on the cake was damaged, and on hearing this, Gerald Muller rode his small motor cycle over to her house where he collected her prize. He then took it back to Mr. Ash who was able to repair the damage. When the lady from Derry Hill received her prize, undamaged, for the second time, she was totally thrilled and insisted on giving Gerald a gift of a live Aylesbury duck. The duck was placed in a cardboard box and brought to Seend Cleeve on the pillion of Gerald's motor bike.



Gerald Muller rides homewards with his prize of a live Aylesbury duck!!

Exhibited at the second rally was an engine called "The Iron Maiden" after the film of the same name. Prior to the film it was named "Wellington", and Mr. Arthur Harper drove it to Seend from Truro in Cornwall. He did not arrive until nearly midnight and could not find a bed for the night. Initially it looked as though he would have to sleep underneath the engine, but he was rescued by Gerald Muller who took him home. There the only space was in the lounge where he slept soundly in a bed made up on the floor.

Arthur was an old friend of Jack Holloway and they kept in touch by letter. As Arthur got older, he found it easier to exchange cassette tapes with Jack, and Pam and Gerald Muller have one of these tapes in their possession. It is quite delightful listening to Arthur, then in his 80's, reminiscing to Jack about "the old days". He is complimentary about the kindness he always received from the inhabitants of Seend.

Concessions for trade stands at the first rally were sold for the very low price of £5, but in view of the tremendous customer potential at the stands, the prices were significantly raised for the following years. Many business people recognised the sales opportunities and there were many bids for the concessions. From 1970 onwards, areas were set aside for trade stalls at a given price per stand. Even so, in 1970 the crockery stall took sufficient money within twenty minutes of opening to pay for their concession charges.

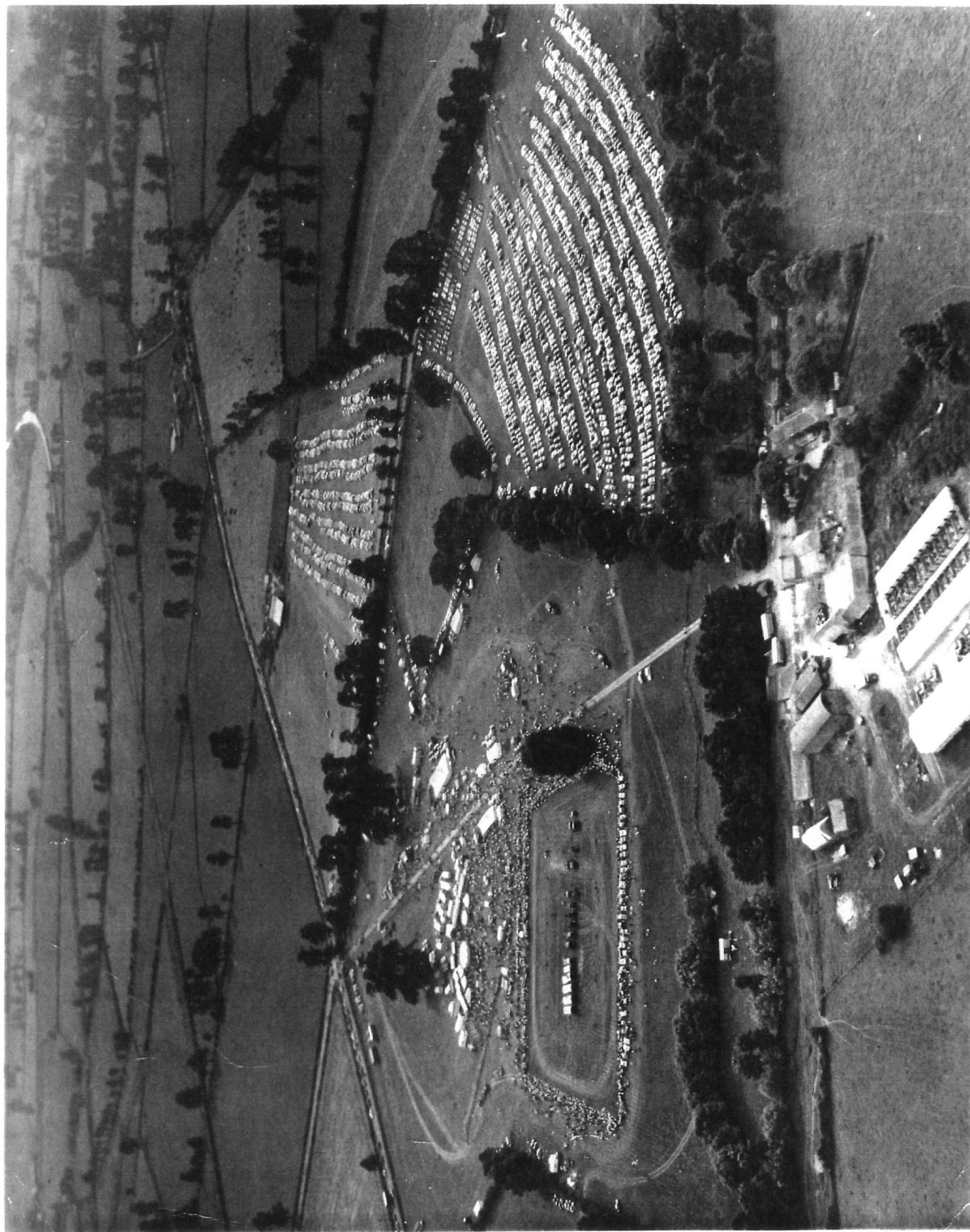
Prices of the day are now of interest. In 1971, Morans Caterers Limited ran the refreshments and a double measure of spirits such as whisky, gin, vodka or rum, together with a mixer, cost 22p. A pint of beer was 15p. and a half pint of lager was 13p. but if lime was added, this went up to 14p.

Tea was 4p. a cup and coffee was 6p. Rolls with various fillings cost 6p. and sandwiches were 13p.

To keep control of the money coming into the tills, runners operated from the Treasurer's tent. To ensure stall holders would be handing their takings to bona fide personnel, the runners carried identification which they had to exchange with the stall holders. As already mentioned, the first rally was successful beyond belief but no real arrangements had been made to look after the takings. For safety, the cash from the first event went underneath Mr. Archie Kidd's bed on the Saturday and Sunday nights.

The final memory of the rallies comes from Mrs. May Giddings. The weather during the first event was very, very hot and sunny, and May was working, without shade, from 10.00 a.m. until 7.00 p.m. By the time she reached home that evening, she was exhausted, sunburnt and blistered. Auntie Marge had to help May to undress and get into bed.

One of the Traction Engine Rallies.



The Traction Engine Rallies could not, and would not, have taken place had it not been for Jack Holloway. Jack and his wife Maisie lived in The Lye, having moved to Wiltshire from Kent. Jack worked as a welder at Archie Kidd Farm Machinery Company, and he revelled in the nickname of Fowler Jack. He was a dedicated steam enthusiast and Fowlers of Leeds had made steam engines.

Jack knew as friends, many of the owners of the traction and showmans engines, and to contact these friends and to ask them to bring their machines to Seend, he used the telephone of the nearest committee member to his own house. The owner of the telephone was David Raby-Cox and he and Jeny and their children well recall his visits to their house. He was not relaxed when speaking on the phone and spoke very loudly during conversations with the owners of the machines. In fact, it appeared that he felt he had to speak more loudly as the distance between the speakers increased, and during his calls to Scotland, Jack would be shouting very, very loudly. The Raby-Cox's telephone bill also went up disproportionately whilst these arrangements were being made.

Heather and Don Hyde's children were also fascinated by Jack. Heather was the Secretary to what was then the Playing Field Committee, and Jack was a regular visitor to her house. He always pleaded dirty boots and would never go inside the house. He was also an inveterate smoker and whilst standing at the door talking with Heather, he would remove his cap and as necessary, would tap his cigarette ash into his cap. Much to the fascination of the Hyde family, on went the cap, plus ash, when he left the house.

Gwy Hopkins recalls a battle of wills between Jack and the Treasurer, John Hutchinson. With organising costs going up and profits reducing, John wanted to lower expenses by reducing the number of fairground organs that came along. Jack took the view that either they all came or none came, but eventually he yielded to John's persuasions.

Fowler Jack's contributions to The Lye Recreation Field are worthily commemorated in his picture and steam momentos which are in a show-case inside the Pavilion.

As a bit of indirect history of the events, following the post traction engine rally review meetings, the executive committee went out and bought themselves a meal, with the first such meal being at the Bell at Overton. Over the following years they, and their wives or husbands, went to various dinner dances such as the Calne N.F.U., the Unigate Ball and the Police Ball. The Aberdeen Angus Breeders Association dinner-dance at Wootton Bassett lasted all night, and everybody went back to the Heaviside's house for breakfast.

¹⁹⁷³
In ~~1971~~, Nancy and John Hutchinson celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary and communal presents of a liqueur decanter and some Benedictine were presented. The accompanying card was signed 'From the Seend Dancing Club' and the group, with new members, still enjoys itself today.

Although the steam rallies dominated the Committee activities during 1968 - 1972, other developments continued satisfactorily. A Constitution had been prepared and was accepted on February 10th 1969 and an application was successfully made to the Charity Commissioners. This application vested the property comprised in the deeds dated 4th April, 1967 and into the keeping of the Official Custodian for Charities. A copy of the Constitution had to be sent to the then Ministry of Education as this was required in connection with the application for grant aid. This constitution still determines the way in which the Seend Lye Recreation Field is organised and controlled.

Wiltshire Playing Field Association gave a grant of £100 towards the levelling and preparing of the field.

A Public Liability Insurance Policy for £50,000 at £1.10.0d. per year was purchased. This was then increased to include the Cricket and Football Clubs at the extra costs of £2 per year. Each Club was invited to contribute £1.0.0d. This raised the cover to £100,000.

By the time the A.G.M. took place in June 1969 a children's' slide had been ordered and a Ministry grant of £2,950 had been promised. It was also proposed to erect a Pavilion.

Where required, interest free loans which enabled the field to be purchased were repaid.

A new problem arose at the end of March, 1969 when John Hutchinson received a letter from the Inland Revenue. The Minutes of December 1968 show that sadly, Miss Usher had died. She had been most generous in helping to purchase the Lye Field and had, in fact, given an interest free loan of £2,250. Shortly before she died, she forgave this debt which made it into an outright gift. The Inland Revenue now wanted their share of death duties and demanded some £1,240.

There is a considerable file on this matter which shows that the argument was drawn out over two years. John's arguments were simple and strongly set out:-

The Lye Field was a charity.

At the time of Miss Usher's death, in addition to the Inland Revenue's demand, the Lye Field also had liabilities of some £940. There were still awaiting a grant from the Department of Education. If they had to pay the demand to the Inland Revenue, the only means of raising the money would be to sell the field. Thus the position would be that one Government department would be offering a grant to keep the field whilst another departments demands would see it sold.

His arguments fell upon deaf ears and the Inland Revenue maintained its demands.

Nearly two years after the first letter, John sought help from the then constituency M.P., Charles Morrison. He in turn appealed to Patrick Jenkins, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury who, after considering the situation, waived the demand. The last letter from the Inland Revenue was posted on the 5th April, 1971, and this confirmed that the matter was closed. This was to the great satisfaction and relief of the Lye Field Committee.

As the threat from the Inland Revenue receded, other developments continued with a see-saw which was made by Jack Holloway, being installed adjacent to the swings. Activities such as this have continued up until today when improvements and additions continue to be made.

A long term contribution came from two men who were great friends. After some seven years of hard work, Heather Hyde wanted to step down from her position as Secretary and Stanley Heavisides was elected to take her place. His appointment was effective from 6th June, 1973 and he was to occupy this position for twenty years. His involvement with the Lye Field had started well before this date, and over the years he worked very closely with John Hutchinson where jointly they looked after much of the administration work which really did demand a lot of attention. This work included contact with solicitors, the Charity Commissioners, and with Local Authorities. John and Stanley would deal with all correspondence and would also arrange all purchases for any events and for all day-to-day requirements. They would make planning applications for any developments.

The Seend Lye Recreation Field owes much to these two men.

Two other people who worked hard and long for the Lye Field were Betty and Bert Vowles. As already mentioned, Betty started collecting signatures in 1967 and she worked almost until her death as bookings secretary. Her daughter, now Sue Holloway, has since carried on with this work, thereby keeping it within the family.

Bert was Chairman of the House Committee; again, almost until his death.

The big event was in 1973 when the Pavilion was built. Due to the success of the traction engine rallies, the Treasurer declared, at the 1972 A.G.M., that sufficient funds were available. A group of people undertook to design the building and Dorothy Hopkins recalls a meeting which took place one evening in Mr. Archie Kidd's house. One of the group could not comprehend the drawings, and was having difficulty in envisaging the finished layout. Without more ado, everybody jumped into cars and went across to Devizes to Kidd's Machinery Factory. There, lengths of metal and wood were laid out in very large scale on the factory floor so that everybody could see just what all of the rooms would be like. They were then treated to a tour of the factory, and finally arrived home sometime after mid-night.

Five local building firms were asked to tender, with the successful bid being made by Messrs. W.E. Chivers of Devizes. Work started on the 12th August, 1972. The total costs were £16,250, of which £15,212 was for building, and £1,038 was for equipment.



Young Caroline Hales gives Mrs Diana Fraser a hand to unveil a plaque at the opening of the Irene Usher memorial pavilion at Seend on Saturday.

Seend pavilion as memorial to 'a great lady'

SEEND'S "dream" came true on Saturday, with the opening of its Irene Usher memorial pavilion—a fitting climax to years of work and money-raising schemes.

The imposing, brick-built pavilion — in the 51-acre Lye recreation field — is in memory of benefactress Miss Usher, who died in 1968, and a striking testimony to the affection the villagers had for her.

An international figure in the Girl Guide movement, Miss Usher — the county camp adviser — was herself one of the guarantors of the £5,500 loan obtained for the original purchase of the Lye field in 1967.

Since then the village had indulged in enormous activity to raise money for the pavilion, culminating in the astonishing total of £28,600.

"Miss Usher loved Seend and we all loved her, and I think by our effort we have a building worthy of her memory," said Mrs Diana Fraser, representing the Girl Guides Association, at the opening ceremony.

"Our children's children will ask, Who was Miss Usher? And they will be told that she was a very great lady who always thought of other people before herself, and her gifts to the village and to Guiding were so numerous and most of them unknown."

'DID SO MUCH'

It was Mrs Fraser, with Stephen Hiscock and Caroline Haines, representing the village children, who unveiled the memorial plaque inside the building recording that the pavilion was "provided for the community of Seend by the effort of all who lived here, in memory of Irene Usher who did so much for the village she loved."

Dedication prayers were led by the Vicar of Seend (the Rev. Gregory Page Turner), and among the huge crowd watching the event were Mr Charles Morrison, MP for Devizes, and many uniformed representatives of the Girl Guide movement.

Inside the entrance hall are two posters of the memorable Seend traction engine rallies which raised £9,200 towards the project, and an aerial view of one of them.

Mr Denis Brand, chairman of the Lye recreation field committee, revealed all the efforts which had gone into making the project materialise.

He thanked everyone for "helping to make this dream come true."

ALL CONTRIBUTED

"Even people on pensions and low incomes, who really couldn't afford anything, contributed — if it was only a cake or a pot of jam — towards this project," he said. "What a fantastic village it is to live in — one in which the community spirit is so high."

In a breakdown of the appeal, he said that the purchase of the field and equipment came to £6,600; the pavilion and fixtures, £16,000; plus expenses of £750, making a total of £23,350, a "very large sum of money by any reckoning."

The social committee raised £633; the traction engine rallies, £9,200; gifts amounted to £2,565; there were grants from the Department of Education and Science of £9,656; and the Irene Usher memorial appeal raised £3,200, together with covenanted income of £1,640.

Mr Brand said the total came to £28,600 of which they had about £3,500 left, earning 10 per cent interest a year.

He said this would be devoted to maintenance and the upkeep of the field and pavilion.

If all went well, he hoped that hard tennis courts and a bowling green might be provided at the recreation field.

"With the spirit in this village, I'm sure anything is possible," he declared.

Mr Brand paid tribute to many individuals associated with the project, among them Mr Archie Kidd, Mr John Hutchinson, the treasurer, Mrs Heather Hyde, secretary, Mr Jack Holloway, Mr Alan Akerman and the former Vicar, the Rev. Kenneth Brown.

Grants of £2,284 from W.C.C. and £4,064 from the Sports Council were a major contribution. The remainder of the costs were £6,346 from the profits from the Traction Engine Rallies, £2,161 raised by various activities and £1,395 raised by the Guides. In addition, as mentioned, Miss Irene Usher had given the Lye Field the sum of £2,250 which initially was to help to pay for the field and pavilion. This subsequently became part of a fund in perpetuity to provide income for maintenance.

Miss Usher was Guide Captain for Seend, County Guide Camp Advisor, and Assistant Guide Camp Advisor for England. In view of the work done by Miss Usher and her Guide companions, Mrs. Diane Fraser represented the Guides when she formally opened the pavilion on Saturday 12th May, 1973. The building was named the Irene Usher Memorial Hall, and a plaque to her memory is inside the main hall. The oldest boy, Stephen Hiscock, and the youngest girl, Caroline Haines, from Seend School presented Mrs. Fraser with flowers. Later, seats were donated and these stand outside the Pavilion today. Mr. and Mrs. Doran were appointed as the first caretakers.

Sadly there were ongoing and unnecessary set-backs. Various reports in the Minutes comment upon garden rubbish from The Lye houses being dumped onto the eastern boundary of the field, and there were instances when council workmen threw rubbish and spoil over the wall and onto the grass. Trees were damaged, wire fencing was broken, and once the cricket square was damaged. On that occasion, the Field Committee Chairman had spoken rather forcibly to the culprits.

In 1986, fifty conifers were planted along the northern boundary. All but one of these were stolen during the course of two weeks.

Today, wooden benches are vandalised with a strength far beyond that of young children; and now, as ever, there are continual problems with dogs being allowed to foul the field.

However, despite such disappointments, progressive developments continued. In June, 1973, the 100 Club was launched. Members would pay an annual donation and from the funds two-thirds would be paid out in draw prizes, with one-third going to Lye Recreation Field funds. John Wellings started the scheme on 6th June, 1973. By December he had enrolled fifty-five members, and he brought the membership up to one hundred by March, 1975.

Bingo sessions which produced both pleasure and income were run by Bert Vowles.

In June, 1974 John Crew made a chute for the skittle alley.

June always seemed to be an active month because it was in June, 1973 that investigations started with a view to providing a tennis court. Several companies had tendered to provide a hard court with the best figure of £2,200 coming from Ea-Tout-Cas. With the prospect of a 30% grant from Wiltshire County Council, considerations were given to the siting of the court. This project dragged on.

Initial ideas were for the southwest corner, but this meant realigning the football field. Eventually an extra piece of land was purchased adjacent to the northwest corner of the field and the tennis court was finally completed during 1977. The Tennis Club is very successful and if anything, the court is over-subscribed. In good weather it is in almost continual use during daylight hours, and a target for the near future will be a second court.

The cessation of the Traction Engine Rallies left something of a vacuum in the Parish. At those events everybody had worked very hard and a strong fellowship and camaraderie had developed. In order to maintain this splendid spirit a Fete was organised in 1973. It coincided with the 24th Annual Flower Show, and the purpose of the Fete was to provide entertainment and pleasure for the Parish populace. The Fete has since become a major event, probably the best village fete in North Wiltshire, and whilst it still gives great pleasure to village people plus many visitors, it is also a fund raising contribution towards Lye Field income.

Planning for a fete starts within days of the previous one taking place, when a review of the previous event is held. Outline plans are formed and as the next year's date approaches, the frequency of planning meetings speeds up and plans are set in motion. In outline, the Fete consists of a parade from School Lane to the Lye Field. This is normally headed by a troupe of majorettes followed by the Fete Princess and her two attendants. Then comes the parade of pedestrians in fancy dress, a variety of vehicle floats and a dressed vehicle for children who are also in fancy dress.

On the Lye Field are various stalls and attractions where visitors are invited to spend their money. There is also entertainment which has come, and comes in many forms: Falconry, parachutists, martial arts displays, and bands. The beer tent, hot dog stall, and chip stall normally do very well.

Each year sees efforts to improve on previous years fetes. One memorable occasion was in 1991 when Ron Westacott, dressed as an Arab, rode a camel and lead the parade from School Road to The Lye Field.

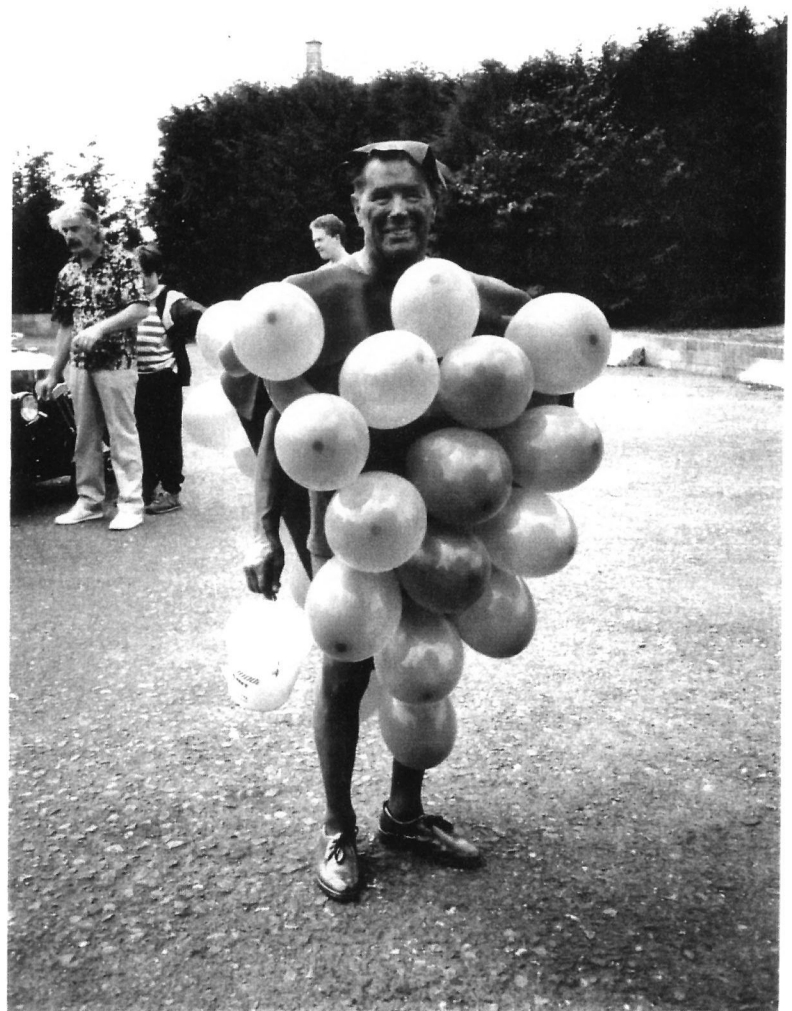
The first fete saw the first of the dog races. Dog owners were invited to persuade and encourage their pets to race over a marked course, with a prize for the winning animal. To encourage her dog Minnie, Fay Brand stood at the winning line and together with her friend Ann Snook, they rattled Minnie's food bowl. Scenting food, the dog went straight towards them and won, leaving all of the other entrants fighting and snarling along the course. Minnie won a bone tied with ribbon, plus a can of dog meat. Fay and Ann were accused of cheating but the food bowl technique became standard practice for most of the owners at subsequent fetes.

Dogs could become a nuisance. Memories are imprecise, but it is thought to be around 1988 when a problem arose. A loose dog was roaming around the fete and during the course of the afternoon, this animal bit several people. The tug-of-war took place at around 5.00 p.m., and by this time, a number of the participants had spent a fair amount of time in the beer tent. The two teams which had reached the finals were locked in the first pull. Neither was particularly gaining nor yielding, and the crowd was giving a lot of vocal support. Suddenly, the dog re-appeared and bit one of the contestants who promptly shouted and let go of the rope. His collapse caused the rest of his team to crumble and they were dragged across the line. For a few seconds there was a potentially ugly situation because several people thought the dog had been sent to sabotage the collapsing team. Ron Westacott was the referee. He shouted at the dog which then bit him! All was resolved amicably and the team which had been attacked by the dog went on to win the next two pulls which gave them the trophy. As another aside, nobody knew who owned the dog. He suddenly appeared on stage at night during a performance of the Fawltly Players Pantomime and immediately there were shouts from the audience of 'there's that so and so dog!.

Various Photographs

from

Various Fetes.

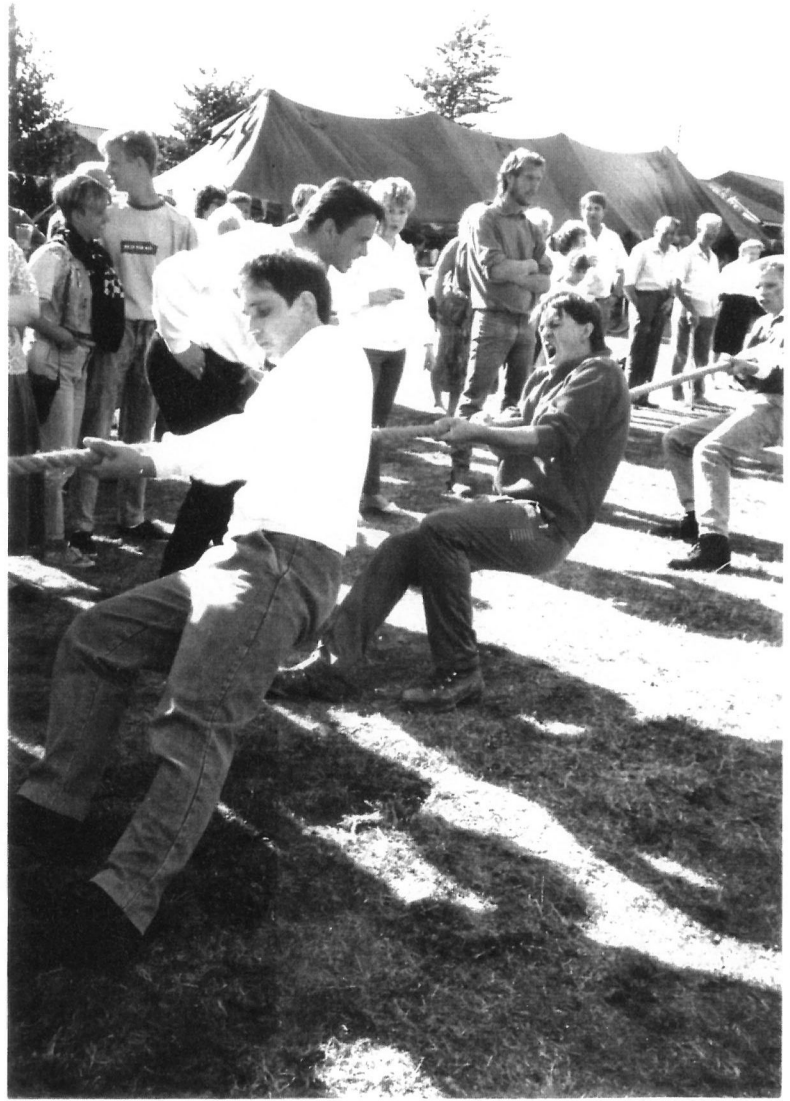














In 1974, one of the attractions was a giant inflated ball, and two teams played a game of push ball. One side scored a goal within a few minutes and this was declared to be the half time point. Stanley Heavisides was the referee and he wanted the result to be a draw. Consequently the second 'half' went on for a greatly extended period to enable the other team to also score.

As the day, which is always the second Saturday in August approaches, there is great anxiety regarding weather prospects. Obviously rain would mar the day and the run up is always a nail-biting period.

The Jubilee Year of 1977 was extensively celebrated throughout the village. The school swimming pool, for which funds had been raised by the then Headmaster, Stanley Heavisides, and built by parents, was opened by the Vicar, The Revd. Gregory Page-Turner, during the morning of the 7th June. This date had been declared a public holiday, and a Jubilee oak tree was planted at the top of Love Lane. All of the children were given a Jubilee mug, and the presentations were made in front of the Pavilion on the Lye Field. During the afternoon there were various races and games on the field, and in the evening the Social Club sold for a time, beer at 1952 prices.

Ushers Brewery were in the process of converting from wooden beer crates to plastic beer crates and David Ford, who then worked with Ushers, had managed to arrange for several lorry loads of these wooden crates to be delivered to the Lye Field. A huge bonfire had been built from these wooden crates and stood on the area adjacent to where the tennis court is now positioned. A chain of bonfires had been built across the country. The Queen was to light a bonfire at Windsor and this would be a progressive signal to light all of the other bonfires across the nation. The Lye Recreation Field Committee had purchased six large rockets and Col. Dick Marks asked the writer to wait at the Bell Inn car park from where the Westbury White Horse bonfire could be seen. Armed with one rocket and matches, the writer and his eldest daughter duly made their way to the Bell and stared into the darkness across the valley. There were the odd bonfires in peoples' gardens which appeared to flare up and it was difficult to detect which was the official fire. Eventually a fire appeared which looked to be the one and the rocket was lit. The writer had borrowed an empty bottle from Dennis Wilkinson and lay in the bank at the side of the road as the rocket gained lift off.

The heat from the rocket was considerable and scorched all of the hairs from the back of the writer's hand, but it successfully launched. It was seen from the Lye Field and was the signal to light the bonfire. The evening was a huge success although there were worries that the heat from the fire would damage the nearby overhead electric wires.

During the day a film was made of the various activities. This is still in the village and the closing scenes show Dick Marks and Peter Fisher spraying water on the undergrowth in the proximity of the bonfire. The fire was creeping and needed to be brought under control.

It was not until the following day that it was realised the bonfire had been lit some ninety minutes before the Queen lit the Windsor bonfire. During the previous evening, heavy rain had delayed the official timetable.

May, 1984 saw the first handiwork of three retired villagers: Stanley Heavisides, John Hutchinson and Bob Smith. The jobs were decorating the interior of the entrance hall of the Pavilion, and flushing out the central heating system. These three were immediately dubbed 'The last of the Summer Wine' and the present group of eight or nine men who meet on Friday mornings, have retained this nickname. Whilst the meetings are almost club like, the group do the majority of the maintenance on the Pavilion and the field with its facilities.

1975 saw the start of another annual event when Joe Burbidge organised a game of cricket on August Bank Holiday. Two teams of non-cricketers: Big Heads -v-Small Heads, played for a home-made bat fashioned by Joe. A limited overs match, with every member except the wicket keeper of the fielding team having to bowl two overs, the game has become a permanent annual fixture. The losers are required to provide a cask of cider for the post match celebrations. It is noticeable that as the years have progressed, the quality of cricket has gone up.



Big Heads v. Little Heads.





There is a long history of cricket in Seend and the original match was played in Seend on 28th August, 1888. The opposition was Spy Park, and to commemorate the event, a centenary match was played on the cricket square on 28th August, 1988. Seend won both matches.

An all weather wicket was laid in the summer of 1990.

The Seend Lye Recreation Field is very much a living organisation. Today there are some sixteen constituent members organisations using the facilities and to a degree, the organisation has been a victim of its own success. The original tack shed which was made of corrugated iron on a wooden frame became totally inadequate and was taken down towards the end of 1989 and replaced with a large concrete structure. There were considerable discussions with planners over this project. They were demanding various colour schemes and extensive tree planting schemes which were thought to be unreasonable. However, all was settled satisfactorily and the building is ideal for its purposes.

The Playgroup particularly was short of storage space and in 1992, plans were finalised to extend the Pavilion. At the end of 1992 and at the beginning of 1993, new changing rooms were built on the eastern side of the building. These released the previous changing rooms and what had been the visitors changing room was gutted and made into a storage room for the Playgroup and the Scouts. What had been the Playgroup store was converted into extra kitchen space.

The extension was formally opened on Sunday 16th May, 1993 and following a unanimous choice from the Committee, the ceremony was performed by the original chairman, Mr. Archie Kidd and Mrs. Margery Kidd. The oldest Seen boy and the youngest Seend girl from Seend School, Richard Moules and Juliet Arkle respectively, handed Mr. and Mrs. Kidd a pair of scissors, and Caroline Haines and Stephen Hiscocks reappeared to hand over flowers and a bottle of champagne.

During the building of the extension, the Committee made plans to erect a Roll of Honour to commemorate village people who had accorded exceptional efforts to provide, maintain and develop the Seend Lye Recreational Field. The board will be made by Ron Westacott and the list will be posthumous. As so many people have contributed over the years, the choice of names, both now and in the future, will be difficult. The April, 1993 edition of 'Spotlight' invited villagers to submit possible names for consideration by the committee.



28th August, 1988.

Centenary Cricket Match.

Seend v. Spye Park.



The extension had been paid for by releasing all of the organisation's liquid assets. As the costs were nearly £30,000, this made a major reduction to financial reserves and as a consequence, The Lye Recreation Field is back where it started over a quarter of a century ago. Firstly, it has to rebuild the depleted reserves. It is not always realised that the organisation receives no support from any official authority and, therefore, a second aim is to build a fund which will yield an annual income which will pay for all annual needs. At the time of writing, this is a long way ahead, and this means that for an indefinite period, The Lye Recreation Field will be staging, hopefully profitable events and entertainment for many years to come.

It is interesting how history repeats itself. In 1969, John Hutchinson battled with the Inland Revenue over Miss Usher's bequest. At the start of 1993 the committee was shocked when they learnt that the Customs & Excise were demanding V.A.T. of over £4,000 on the new extension. Prior to this, all enquiries and advice had pointed to the development being zero rated and to date, all efforts to avoid this demand have failed. At the time of writing it appears that the only possible opportunity left open will be a plea of help from our Member of Parliament

This brief history has been entitled "A Village Achievement" for three reasons. Firstly, purchasing the field was a major achievement. Raising the money and building the Pavilion was a second major achievement. Thirdly, the effort that went into creating this major village asset was the catalyst that united the Parish and produced a fellowship and spirit which is second to none.

OFFICERS OF THE SEEND LYE RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairman:

A.W. Kidd	1967-72
D.J. Brand	1972-77
E. Akerman	1977-80
D.J. Brand	1980-81
D. Ford	1981-83
B.A.L. Hunt	1983-86
R.S. Smith	1986-89
P.M. Fisher	1989-92
J.S. Smallshaw	1992-

Secretary:

Mrs. H. Hyde	1967-73
S. Heavisides	1973-

Treasurer:

J. Fraser	1967-68
J.G. Hutchinson	1968-92
D.J. Brand	1992-