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- COACHBUILT**
- 1973 (June) Rolls-Royce Corniche 2-door sal. by H. J. Mulliner, Park Ward. Regal red with beige hide. Recorded migs. 28,000 £11,950
 - 1965 (Apr.) Rolls-Royce Phantom V touring limousine by James Young. Midnight blue with blue hide to the front and blue cloth to the rear. Recorded migs. 36,000 £12,950
 - 1972 (Aug.) Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow long wheelbase sal. with division. Black over shell grey with black hide to the front and grey hide to the rear. Recorded migs. 38,000 £9,950
 - 1962 (Mar.) Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II long wheelbase sal. with division by James Young. Tudor grey with beige hide. Recorded migs. 22,000 £9,950
 - 1971 (Mar.) Rolls-Royce Corniche 2-dr. sal. by H. J. Mulliner, Park Ward. Garnet with black hide. Recorded migs. 50,000 £9,250
 - 1972 (June) Silver Shadow sal. Shell grey with dark blue hide. Recorded migs. 11,000 £9,250
 - 1972 (Oct.) Silver Shadow sal. Sand over Sable with beige hide. Recorded migs. 25,000 £9,850
 - 1970 (Dec.) Silver Shadow sal. Dark blue with grey cloth int. Recorded migs. 40,000 £6,950

A member of the Dutton-Forsshaw Group.



DEBENHAM

Luckiest village in the land?

lan Nairn

DEBENHAM, Suffolk. Pop. about 1,200. London 84, Ipswich 13. Four pubs, two butchers, one fish and chip shop. One haulage contractor, one specialised agricultural engineering business, three antique shops, one rush-weaving shop, suppliers to the Queen, one small department store, established 1707.

Hey, what's going on? English villages are complicated places, but this one seems to be more complicated than most. Let's start again. Debenham is, half-way between Ipswich and the Norfolk border, in that magical part of Suffolk which seems to be thousands of feet high when in fact it rarely tops two hundred.

Wide fields, wide skies, everything pretty without trying to be. As pretty as Lavenham, but not invaded and doesn't want to be. Akenfield country—the "Akenfield" village, Charsfield, is about six miles to the south-east. Giles country too: his home at Willesham is nine miles away on the Ipswich road. Debenham's pubs are Giles pubs, Debenham's farms are Giles farms. Native shrewdness, a hatred of pretension: go fly-on-the-wall into a Debenham pub, and it will all happen, eventually. Walk in bold and bray "Landlord, a pint of your excellent bitter," and you will get nowhere.

That peasant mould (I doubt if they ever were peasants, in spite of Akenfield) was finally fractured in the war. The ghosts of the Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th and 9th USAAF are still booming around the Debenham skies and overgrown runways and control towers pop up every five miles or so. Today, British Lightnings from Watlington and American Phantoms from Bentwaters carry on the good work.

After the war, decline; a slow winding-down like the Irish country towns west of the Shannon. And now, fingers

crossed, a balance is emerging, secure both from further decay and mass invasion.

Lucky old Debenham—except in its public transport, as Judith Jackson will tell you. But what about the other ten thousand English villages? Many have been visually swamped by infilling since the war, the price of keeping the countryside intact. From Lincolnshire to Somerset, there are bungalows all around—Debenham has them too, but they are tidily away on one side, and the main street is absurdly intact.

But swamped socially? I doubt it. The incomers have restored the population to what it would have been if farming still needed the workers that it did a century ago. Better than that total decay. And the present less-exuberant economic climate (though if you think we've never had it so bad again, Debenham is working in favour of the villages. Fewer idle journeymen, more of cultivating your garden.

The village is holding on to its idiosyncrasies. That "small department store," for example, Henry Abbott Ltd. was indeed founded in 1707, and is still in the same family. A few years ago it expanded into what you would call a small supermarket, though it is much more comely than most supermarkets. People who would have travelled to shop in Ipswich or Stow (Stowmarket) now tend to stay at home.

That supermarket was built on the site of a pub—at one time Debenham had fourteen. The last landlord, long ago, founded the Debenham Brass Band, bringing the instruments home on his penny-farthing—all except the bass drum, for which he needed help.

Inside the church tower there are details of many bell-ringing exploits. So what? Because among the standard 5,000-odd changes, there is a stone tablet recording that on June 6th 1892 there was rung, a peal of 16,608 and, in 10 hours 32 minutes "being the longest time ever one set of men have stood to ring without rest."

That spirit, that sudden deep surprise, is still alive in Debenham. One of the butchers sends Suffolk smoke-cured ham on special order to London; Aspath cyder house a mile up the road does the same with its health-tipple. That was created in 1728 by Monsieur Chevallier, from Normandy: the original presses are still there. The old Stowmarket road is now a cul-de-sac leading to one farm. It is also the river Deben, not for a yard or

SCENE

Edited by Philip Clarke

The English village is a way of life. But for how much longer? When the Normans landed, most villages were already old. Yet many of them managed to survive almost another thousand years, defying the malpractices of men and the onslaught of history. Do they now have the muscle and spirit to withstand the encroachments of a highly urbanised industrial society? What does the future hold for them? It is a question which will be debated at a Council for the Protection of Rural England conference in September. Meanwhile some villages reckon they have something to celebrate and, as part of European Architectural Heritage Year, they are putting on their own village festivals starting this weekend. Debenham in Suffolk is one of them. As SCENE discovered, it is a village which has managed to avoid becoming a fossilised museum piece or a suburban dormitory.

two, but for near on a mile: a green jungle tunnel more like the Amazon than the Deben. The river bottom is repaired in summer, when the stream dries up.

The vast pedimented hall of the Ancient Order of Foresters may now house antiques but the newsagent's notice-board nearby tells a different story. For Sale: banister's cage. Wanted: broody hen.

In the same way, the Festival (June 19-22) is not going to be a vast jamboree; it is trying to show Debenham to Debenhamers. If anyone else cares to turn up they will be very welcome indeed, but this is a private celebration—all the best ones are. Amongst other things on the 21st, there will be a steam traction engine, an egg-throwing contest, and a kind of dice banking (which is a kind of baseball played with a kitchen mop, the dice). The school-children have written a set of essays which read like an up-to-date Akenfield. And if you go into the public bar of the Red Lion, where it all happens, and feel like a game of darts, then taken a good look at the dart-board first. It is numbered in 5s, 10s, 15s and 20s, and the players flinty lower framed by hedgerow oaks. It's a wonder it isn't on the tourist trail.

When I think of Debenham what I see is the watersplash in Water Lane, and the long main

THE VILLAGERS

This is their life

Brian Jackman

NOTHING MUCH out of the ordinary happened in Debenham last week. It seldom does. The Red Lion darts team played away on Monday and continued their unbeaten run. On Tuesday there was a rehearsal for the mums' play and a contest for girls aged seven to 12 to choose a princess for the festival. Apart from that, just the Brownies and the Evergreen Club for the over 60's in the Parish Room.

Debenham is about as deep in the Suffolk countryside as you can get. Seas of corn and cow parsley lap at the cottage doorsteps and the first you see of the village is the church, just a glimpse across the fields, a squat flinty tower framed by hedgerow oaks. It's a wonder it isn't on the tourist trail.

When I think of Debenham what I see is the watersplash in Water Lane, and the long main

street, all colourwash and crooked timbers and high-peaked roofs. What I hear are the voices of the people, and above all of the old men, frail and bent now, but men who once fought great fist fights, went away to the war and came home to work the land, stamping out into the wide Suffolk dawns with those huge heavy horses. Let them—and their neighbours—tell you about life in Debenham. For they know it better than anyone.

Malcolm Bloomfield, retired engineer, 84

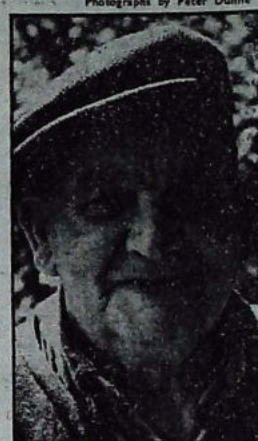
I come to Debenham as an engineer when I was 21. There was plenty of work. I had to gear the mill wheels with the old wooden cogs. There used to be three windmills and one steam mill. Then came the first war but I didn't go. They had me up to the army but they said blast you mustn't take him, he's the only one who can keep the steam plough going.

Things have wholly changed now. When I first come here the streets was all stones. You couldn't ride a bike on that, especially on them Wymondham flints. Sharp as razors, they was. We should never have worked like we used to if it wasn't for the old beer. That modern beer, that ain't good for nothin'. That old beer was strong and good. That was more natural. It put more life into you. That was home brewed. Everybody brewed in them days because water weren't fit to drink. Yes, we drank that good old beer and we worked hard. When things were done in my time they were done, and lasted.

Jack Pallant, retired farm worker, aged 76.

I've lived in Debenham for 70 years, ever since I was a little 'ol boy. When I was about twelve I left school and found a job as a butcher's boy. Then I was a hawker, selling cream, paraffin for the lamps, anythin'. Then I became a hossman.

What I learned was kindness is the way to treat hosses. You can't beat it. Kindness will go a long way with hosses. Well, in them days we used to turn out at 8.30 and have a bit 'ol food at 8.30. We'd work on till 11 and then have our bait; that was usually a bottle 'ol cold tea, bit 'ol bread and cheese and an onion. Sometimes my mother used to make me a little 'ol beef pudding and put it in my frait—that's my



Jack Pallant: "became a hossman"



Len Aldous: "we had some fun"

bait-bag. Well, after that we'd go back to work till 2.30. Then clean the hosses, clean the stable and be finished about 3.30. The hosses was all Suffolks. Beautiful hosses. Has Debenham changed? It's changed a darn lot. They've built 40 or 50 little bungalows on about

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Photographs by Peter Dunne

Special Cars

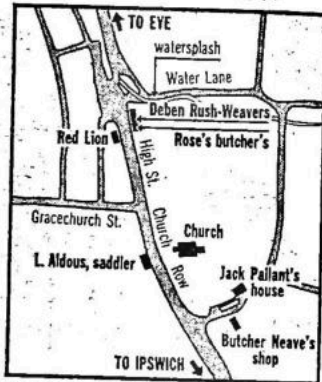
- 1974 Rolls-Royce Corniche Convertible. Finished in deep maroon with beige hide and beige hood. One owner. 3,900 miles £17,450
- 1974 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow. Finished in larch green with black hide. Fitted picnic tables to rear. One owner. 9,000 miles £11,850
- 1973 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow. Finished in Le Mans blue over silver mink with magnolia hide. Fitted lambs-wool rugs, sunshade roof, headrests. 30,000 miles £9,500
- 1971 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow. Long wheelbase with division. Finished in velvet green with beige hide. One owner. 15,000 miles £9,250
- 1965 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III Saloon. Finished in black over shell grey with black hide. 43,600 miles £6,650
- 1964 Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn by Prestone & Webb. Finished in black over silver grey with light blue hide. 77,000 miles.
- 1927 Rolls-Royce Phantom I Open Tourer with Replica Grosvenor Body. Beautifully restored and finished in cream with red hide.

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BROUGHTONS



Hold up these pages, half open. Start from the edges and work in. You will be looking up Debenham High Street, from south to north. The left-hand page shows the west side, the right-hand page the east. It is abbreviated in parts, but even so John Grimwade's drawing gives a splendid picture of what it is like. In Debenham the street is the village, luckily neither half demolished, nor tarted up, a fresco of differing shapes and levels, the handwork of generations of village builders and craftsmen. The map shows where some of the buildings are.



Photographs by Peter Dunne

Peter Neave, 61, master butcher and parish councillor.

I've lived here all my life, and my father before me. This house was built by Giles Gooding about 180 years ago.

A general master butcher, that's what I am. I send a lot of smoked hams to London. Real Suffolk home-cured hams, pickled with non-chemical pickle and smoked with pure English oak sawdust. They're done like this: The pig is killed, chopped down, shaped in hams and brined for three weeks. Then out of the brine into a sweet pickle of Barbado sugar—that's very hard to come by—and black treacle for four weeks. Then they are smoked—it must be English oak sawdust to give 'em a flavour—for about eight days.

I always wear this coat. Ever seen one like that? You won't see another one. It's a traditional Newmarket-cut master butcher's coat. I have them specially made. I like to wear it. You're a character then, a man of your own.

In my time I've seen the horse completely disappear; also the steam plough and the steam threshing machine. We had five pony-and-traps goin' out from this butcher's.

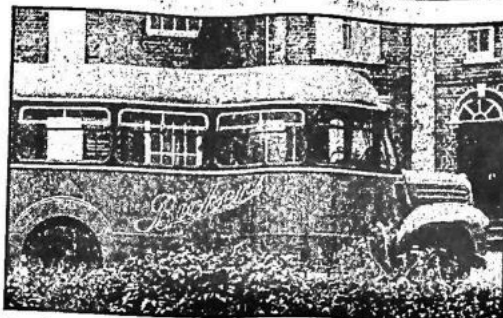
People who live in the country don't need a holiday. Here is a holiday.

Miss Ella Mills, rush-weaver.

The Deben Rush-Weavers was started 26 years ago by Mr Pinney and I've worked there all that time. When it started I just thought, well, I'll have a go, and that was that. I've been here ever since. I started plaiting round table mats. They were the only things I were taught. The rest I picked up from seeing the others doing it. I always did the basket handles, and still do. Mr Pinney, he said I always plaited handles tighter than anyone else. We just do the rush-work here, no osiers. Rush baskets, mats, chair-seating. Right now there's three of us full-time and five part-time, mostly folk who used to work here and now do a bit in their own homes.

I've known Debenham all my life. I was born and grew up in a village just outside, called Wetheringsett. I live by myself. I've got a big garden and that is my one interest.

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VILLAGE TRANSPORT

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The pattern of transport in Debenham is echoed throughout English villages. A non-existent train, an infrequent bus, and an increasing dependence on the car. Bicycles and motor-cycles have a role to play, but in Debenham it's a fairly small one. It's just too far to either, Stowmarket or Ipswich for any but the most hardy to do the journey regularly on two wheels.

when he's not too busy. "You could play hopscotch in the street at lunchtime here," he says, "but you leap for your life first thing in the morning or at half-past five." Even Debenham has a rush hour.

Rex's taxi service runs a mini-bus for some of the local factory workers, but for the rest it's back to the car—or the bus.

Debenham nearly didn't have a bus at all. Last summer Eastern Counties service pulled out because it couldn't get a subsidy. Now the service is operated by a private company, Bickers of Coddanham, which is making ends meet—but only just. If it gives up, Suffolk County Council will have to decide whether to dip into its coffers to keep a bus service going, or else make Debenham completely reliant on the car.

THE VILLAGE GARDEN

Scents of the past

Lanning Roper

TREES AND COTTAGE gardens are as important to the character of Debenham as the architecture of its church, shops and houses. It is especially in East Anglia that we find cottage gardens filled with a profusion of flowers—some old-fashioned varieties, the inevitably newer roses, novelly shrubs, perennials, laburnums

character of village gardens. Rhododendrons and exotics were slow to be acquired because they were expensive and scarce.

What plants are we sure to find in Debenham and other local villages? Obviously climbing roses, often old pink or creamy yellow ramblers, fragrant honeysuckles and on cold grey days the cheerful golden winter jasmine. In spring aubretias make a tapestry in shades of violet, plum, pink and purple, with the strong yellow of *Alyssum saxatile* and the white of perennial candytuft. Fragrant wall flowers in mixed array, polyanthus, sweet rocket and forget-me-nots hold sway with the daffodils and tulips. A fine clump of Crown Imperial fritillaries and the heavily-scented *Madonna Lily (Lilium candidum)* both rather fickle growers, often thrive in cottage gardens and languish in larger grander ones.

In summer there are superb sweet peas, sweet williams, flaming poppies, lupins, tall blue delphi-

chrysanthemums, beloved by gardeners with almost as much fervour as the rose. Temporary improvised shelters appear in autumn to keep off the frosts. Competition is keen to produce the largest, the earliest, the latest, the best. The race for the earliest potatoes, the perfect rose, the first peas or the largest marrow is hard fought in many an East Anglian village.

THE VILLAGE HOME

Out in the wilds

Robert Troop

I SUPPOSE IF you put Debenham on wheels and towed it 50 miles nearer London—or Nottingham or Leicester, for that matter—it would soon become a rich man's ghetto with an implaceable protection society. As it is, Suffolk has so many pretty villages that Debenham has escaped being turned into an expensive museum piece. It is still a real village, not a commuters' dormitory.

This is also because Debenham is a bit off the beaten track. Far from town, far from the sea. A man in Woodbridge summed it up: "I wouldn't fancy living there, stuck out in the wilds. It's a long way from Ipswich, 16 miles there, 16 miles back. People go to Debenham for a day out, to see the High Street and Crow's Hall. They buy an ice cream and walk in the middle of the road."

Yet those who live in Debenham obviously like it. They don't move very often and houses seldom come on the market. When they do, the asking prices aren't as swollen by the promise of city money as they are in, say, Woodbridge itself. At the moment you could buy a 17th-century cottage in Debenham's ancient and amiable High Street for £7,500. True, it could need £4,000 spending on it to bring it up to modern standards, but the outlay is fairly modest for the net result. Or you could buy a five-roomed detached and modernised 18th-century cottage for £20,000.

though this is a bit pricey. Try a bid of £15,000. Top price in the village might be £40,000, for which you would get something splendid with perhaps five bedrooms, an extensive garden and a pedigree going back into the sands of time.

Debenham's "remoteness" is probably a saving feature. It seems to have escaped the many other shocks that villages like it were exposed to in the late Sixties and early Seventies. In those house-boom years a flood of second-home hunters poured down the motorways looking for cheap places to do up, and a flood of professionals went ahead of them looking for even cheaper places to do up to sell to second-home hunters.

Suffolk itself is just a shade too far from London to have caught the full brunt of the second-home invasion. Those that did come by-passed the inland villages such as Debenham and Framlingham and went straight to the sea. The same is true now of people who retire to East Anglia: they tend to go to seaside places like Southwold or Aldeburgh or farther up the coast into Norfolk where prices are lower.

Debenham's one estate agent, J. Clifford and Co. in the High Street, changed hands in April, and the two new partners are enthusiastically selling the village as a place for outsiders to move to. They claim to be having some success. Other villages are gradually being colonised by the staff of new firms moving into Ipswich, an ever-expanding commercial centre. Woodbridge, I'm told, has benefited greatly because of the new Post Office Research Station at Martlesham. But only a little of this influx has found its way to Debenham.

Not that the village has remained entirely untouched. Many of the prettiest places in Suffolk have been disfigured by new housing development, both council and private, and Debenham is no exception. It has two new private developments, one fairly ugly, one rather better. New building is necessary, of course, if a village is to stay alive and if young people are going to be able to afford to live there. On the Debenham estates one can buy two-bedroom bungalows for about £9,500 and three-bedroom ones for around £10,500—reasonable prices, certainly, though sales are very slow. People who do decide to live in a place like Debenham naturally tend to prefer the old.



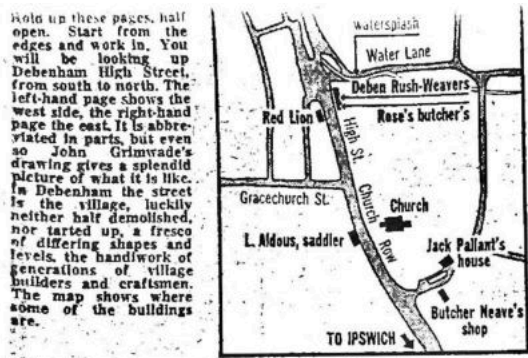
Peter Neave: "I send Suffolk home-cured hams to London"

six acres. But life's a little better for everyone now.

Pauline Heywood, housewife.

My husband and I have lived in Debenham for three years. Moving here was one of the best things we ever did. It's like belonging to an enormous family. I've heard it said that in the old days Debenham used to have this reputation of being a hard vil-

lage. He had to send his own horses down to haul it. I lost my father when I was nine. He had a hawker's business and I well remember travelling around the countryside in his horse van. I had to help him work a lot after father died, but we had some fun. I well remember goin' to school for 'bigger boys' when I was seven. That was unruly



Photographs by Peter Dunne



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Len Aldous, 74, retired saddler.

I was born here 74 years ago and I think there's nowhere like Debenham. I think we've got that character here, of being friendly.

When I was a little of boy you could play in the street. There was only one motor car. That belonged to the doctor. Everything was horses in those days. We even had a horse-drawn fire brigade, and if a farmer had

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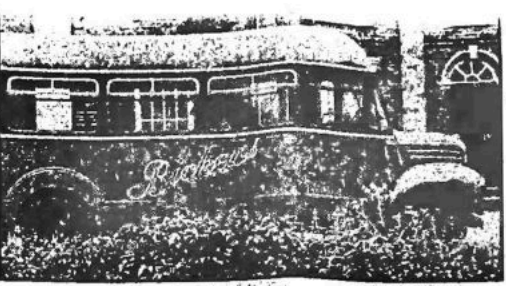
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The country is the life for me. If I go to Ipswich I'm dead beat when I get back. I've no desire to live in a town at all. I can sit here and work and watch who's goin' on about us out side. We're not shut up in four walls, like a factory. It's a peaceful life.

Gary French, 14, schoolboy.

I live on the council estate and I go to school at Debenham Modern. It went comprehensive last year. I've always lived in Debenham. It's nice. You've got lots of friendly people and it's quiet. You can go for walks and play football without being bothered. I'm an Ipswich supporter. I go in every Saturday they're playing at home. I only missed one game this season. I play for the school team and the Debenham youth team sometimes. The thing I like best about Debenham is the people. They're so friendly. But I wish there was a cinema or a swimming pool.



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They don't drive grand cars in Debenham. Apart from the occasional Alfa, the hot favourite seems to be the five-year-old small family saloon, carefully maintained. The outlying parts of the village might almost be called old-banger land. The faithful jalopy clearly plays an essential role in family life.

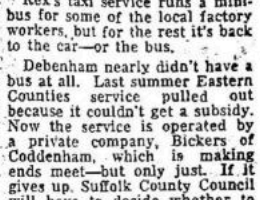
A 1948 Triumph 1800, bought new from the village garage, still does sterling service for the widow of a retired doctor. Paddy Shulver has maintained the car from new; but he says that in the past few years the pattern of car care has changed a lot. "What with mortgage repayments and the price of petrol, people can't afford to take their cars to a garage to have them serviced. A lot of them just haven't the money to pay what we have to charge. So they do it themselves."

They do, too. Outside the front gate, mostly, or jacked up in the drive. But Paddy's not complaining. He's got more than enough

when he's not too busy. "You could play hopscotch in the street at lunchtime here," he says, "but you leap for your life first thing in the morning or at half-past five." Even Debenham has a rush hour.

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Scents of the past

Lanning Roper

TREES AND COTTAGE gardens are as important to the character of Debenham as the architecture of its church, shops and houses. It is especially in East Anglia that we find cottage gardens filled with a profusion of flowers—some old-fashioned varieties, the inevitably newer roses, novelty shrubs, perennials, laburnums and the familiar lilacs in May. Then there are the fruit trees with their wealth of blossom in spring and heavy bounty of fruit in a good autumn.

The early cottage garden lacked sophistication, having evolved from practical needs. Vegetables were essential: carrots, potatoes, onions, leeks, peas, beans and lettuces would grow among blackcurrants, rhubarb and gooseberries. There would be a clump of mint for peas, new potatoes and lamb, sage for pork and the Christmas goose and lots of parsley. A few raspberries could be tucked against the fence.

Mixed with these would be clumps of flowers, usually with borders against the house and along the front path. In many of the real old cottage gardens, lawn was completely suppressed in favour of produce.

It is fascinating to note the popularity of certain plants, a clump of pale yellow or violet auriculas, deep red paeonies, scented blue irises, or a particu-

lars were expensive and scarce.

What plants are we sure to find in Debenham and other local villages? Obviously climbing roses, often old pink or creamy yellow ramblers, fragrant honeysuckles and on cold grey days the cheerful golden winter jasmine. In spring aubretias make a tapestry in shades of violet, plum, pink and purple, with the strong yellow of Alyssum sarafite and the white of porcelain candytuft. Fragrant wall flowers in mixed array, polyanthus, sweet rocket and forget-me-nots hold sway with the daffodils and tulips. A fine clump of Crown Imperial fritillaries and the heavily-scented Madonna lily (*Lilium candidum*), both rather fickle growers, often thrive in cottage gardens and languish in larger grander ones.

In summer there are superb sweet peas, sweet williams, flaming poppies, lupins, tall blue delphi-

groomed. Many will have been grown from cuttings. Autumn brings chrysanthemums, beloved by gardeners with almost as much fervour as the rose. Temporary improvised shelters appear in autumn to keep off the frosts. Competition is keen to produce the largest, the earliest, the latest, the best. The race for the earliest potatoes, the perfect rose, the first peas or the largest marrow is hard fought in many an East Anglian village.

THE VILLAGE HOME

Out in the wilds

Robert Troop

I SUPPOSE IF you put Debenham on wheels and towed it 50 miles nearer London—or Nottingham or Leicester, for that matter—it would soon become a rich man's ghetto with an implacable protection society. As it is, Suffolk has so many pretty villages that Debenham has escaped being turned into an expensive museum piece. It is still a real village, not a commuters' dormitory.

This is also because Debenham is a bit off the beaten track. Far from town, far from the sea. A man in Woodbridge summed it up: "I wouldn't fancy living there, stuck out in the wilds. It's a long way from Ipswich, 16 miles there, 16 miles back. People go to Debenham for a day out, to see the High Street and Crow's Hall. They buy an ice cream and walk in the middle of the road."

Yet those who live in Debenham obviously like it. They don't move very often and houses seldom come on the market. When they do, the asking prices aren't as swollen by the promise of city money as they are in, say, Woodbridge itself. At the moment you could buy a 17th-century cottage in Debenham's ancient and amiable High Street for £7,500. True, it could need £4,000 spending on it to bring it up to modern standards, but the outlay is fairly modest for the net result.

Or you could buy a five-roomed detached and modernised 16th century cottage for £20,000,

splendid with perhaps five bedrooms, an extensive garden and a pedigree going back into the sands of time.

Debenham's "remoteness" is probably a saving feature. It seems to have escaped the many other shocks that villages like it were exposed to in the late Sixties and early Seventies. In those house-boom years a flood of second-home hunters poured down the motorways looking for cheap places to do up, and a flood of professionals went ahead of them looking for even cheaper places to do up to sell to second-home hunters.

Suffolk itself is just a shade too far from London to have caught the full brunt of the second-home invasion. Those that did come by-passed the inland villages such as Debenham and Framlingham and went straight to the sea. The same is true now of people who retire to East Anglia: they tend to go to seaside places like Southwold or Aldeburgh or farther up the coast into Norfolk where prices are lower.

Debenham's one estate agent, J. Clifton and Co. in the High Street, changed hands in April, and the two new partners are enthusiastically selling the village as a place for outsiders to move to. They claim to be having some success. Other villages are gradually being colonised by the staff of new firms moving into Ipswich, an ever-expanding commercial centre. Woodbridge, I'm told, has benefited greatly because of the new Post Office Research Station at Martlesham. But only a little of this influx has found its way to Debenham.

Not that the village has remained entirely untouched. Many of the prettiest places in Suffolk have been disfigured by new housing development, both council and private, and Debenham is no exception. It has two new private developments, one fairly ugly, one rather better. New building is necessary, of course, if a village is to stay alive and if young people are going to be able to afford to live there. On the Debenham estates one can buy two-bedroom bungalows for about £9,500 and three-bedroom ones for around £10,500—reasonable prices, certainly, though sales are very slow. People who do decide to live in a place like Debenham naturally tend to prefer the old.



AUSTRALIA

Australia still needs particular skilled and other qualified migrant workers.

Opportunities exist right now for:-

bricklayers,
carpenters,

occupational therapists,
panel beaters,

jealous of their girls. They would come out of their pubs on a Saturday night and tremendous fights would take place. There are still one or two old men in the village who, when young, would walk as far as Framlingham for a fight. You see, they had this reputation, and felt they had to live up to it.

Ben Aldous, 74, retired saddler.

I was born here 74 years ago and I think there's nowhere like Debenham. I think we've got that character here, of being friendly. When I was a little of boy you could play in the street. There was only one motor car. That belonged to the doctor. Everything was horses in those days. We even had a horse-drawn fire brigade, and if a farmer had

man and he had lost control. Then we had a young man come with three canes under his arm and he soon took control. He used to keep a length of perambulator tyre and lay about him with that if we boys misbehaved.

I passed my exams at reading, writing and arithmetic, and because I had a trade to go to they let me leave school before I was thirteen. I was apprenticed to a saddler. In 1913 I think it was, the first motor bus came to Debenham.

I was parish councillor for about 30 years until I retired in 1965. Today I've got an old man's job; I'm churchwarden. I was up in the church arranging a memorial service for a very old friend. And the thought struck me, I'm nearly 75 and one day soon we'll have to lay this work aside, and I wonder what the end will be like.

to live in a town at all. I can sit here and work and watch what's goin' on about us outside. We're not shut up in four walls, like a factory. It's a peaceful life.

Gary French, 14, schoolboy.

I live on the council estate and I go to school at Debenham Modern. It went comprehensive last year. I've always lived in Debenham. It's nice. You've got lots of friendly people and it's quiet. You can go for walks and play football without being bothered. I'm an Ipswich supporter. I go in every Saturday they're playing at home. I only missed one game this season. I play for the school team and the Debenham youth team sometimes. The thing I like best about Debenham is the people. They're so friendly. But I wish there was a cinema or a swimming pool.

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Mixed with these would be clumps of flowers, usually with borders against the house and along the front path. In many of the real old cottage gardens, lawn was completely suppressed in favour of produce.

It is fascinating to note the popularity of certain plants; a clump of pale yellow or violet of pale yellow, deep red pasotes, scented blue irises, or a particular rose. Plants changed hands freely in a small village, and in all probability the gardener at the Hall brought home seeds, cuttings or roots. The average cottager did not order from nurseries or garden centres as is customary today, so new varieties were slow to appear in smaller gardens. In other words, there was always a time lag between what flourished in the gardens of local estates and those of the villagers—a time lag which helped preserve the essential

They do, too. Outside the front gate, mostly tucked up in the drive. But Paddy's not complaining. He's got more than enough to do. His family founded the garage in 1904 and, apart for a few years, Shulvers have owned it ever since. It straddles the road at the entrance to the village, part of it housed in the old schoolroom, where the bookshelves and school doors are still in daily use.

Like all village garages, he provides a bit of everything. New cars, used cars, service, repairs, advice about the lawnmower and a chat in the middle of the day

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Village festivals

DEBENHAM is one of 16 villages in Britain celebrating European Architectural Heritage Year. This summer each village is staging a festival (dates are listed below) featuring local customs, traditions, crafts and other events which give a picture of village life. They start this weekend at Stonesfield, Oxfordshire, a true-yellow Cotswold village.

Some are in fact small towns—Upton-on-Severn (June 19-22) and Appleby (June 26-29)—though they may be smaller than many villages. Some are very close to towns, yet they keep their own character intact: Shincliffe (July 3-6) is next to Durham, and Christleton (July 17-20) is next to Chester. Easingwold (July 24-27), north of York is like Debenham, a decayed town, and was visually spectacular in Yorkshire as Debenham is in East Anglia.

Chiddingfold, Surrey (June 14-15), is inevitably connected with London, and Whalley, Lancashire (June 12-15), is equally attached to Blackburn and Burnley, but both keep their own counsel. Buckler's Hard (July 11-13) is near the Beaulieu Motor Museum. Combe Martin (August 2-8), near Ilfracombe, has too many people for three months of the year and not enough for the other nine. And Castleton, Derbyshire (September 2-5)—in the Peak District, slung between Manchester and Sheffield—has all the pressures and enough local industry and natural resilience to overcome them.

Scotland has Luss (September 5-7), on Loch Lomond, and Aboyne (August 30-September 5) and Braemar (September 8-14) in the Grampians—too close together, for me I'd love to have seen something from Ilfe or the far Northwest. Wales has Caerleon (August 25-30), near Newport, which you could call the oldest village of all, because the street plan is still that of the Roman settlement.

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AUSTRALIA

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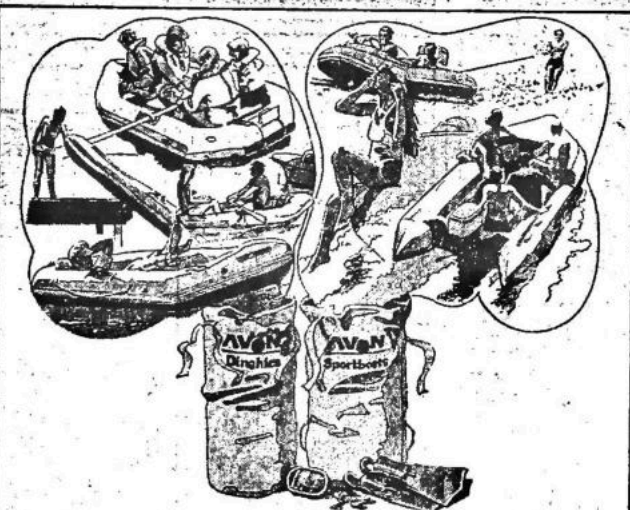
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