

A Fond Farewell in 2006 to Dave Sneade, the Village Postman for 30 years



The Last Post



No bugle played to mark the occasion, but Wednesday 31st May was the end of an era in Charlton Horethorne parish. Postman Dave Sneade who has pounded the local beat for no less than 30 years gave his last cheery greeting, told his last dreadful joke and delivered his final letter. But as Dave shook each customer's hand in terminal farewell he may have pondered the enigmatic smiles, the lack of parting gifts. Did they know something he didn't know?

Two days later - on Dave's 60th birthday in fact - Jan Sneade took husband Dave out, ostensibly for a meal. She led him instead to the Village Hall where nearly 200 folk from Charlton Horethorne and Sigwells, and a few from further afield, were quietly waiting behind closed doors. There was a huge round of applause (fit for a royal male) and the spell was broken.

Most of us would have been overawed by all this attention:

embarrassed perhaps, surprised, emotional. If Dave was any of these things he didn't show it. For the rest of the evening he just chatted and reminisced with the friends to whom he had become an essential part of everyday life.

Keith and Sue Gudgeon are to be congratulated on arranging the whole affair, which ran with military precision: the 'secret publicity', the collection of donations (£1256), the purchase of a 26-inch 'bells and whistles' TV (in consultation with Jan), the organisation of villagers to provide food and to decorate the hall. Thanks are due also to the Village Hall Committee who supported the project at every stage. Stephen Hall delivered an entertaining and informative speech highlighting how Dave was much more than a village postman; to many he was a friend, confidant and carer.

It was a fitting end to a worthwhile career. And the evening itself was a tribute to the community spirit which exists in Charlton Horethorne parish. Without the input of dozens of unnamed individuals such an event could not have taken place (the cake, the flowers, the food, the decoration, the marquee, the bar, the souvenir items, etc); so very special thanks to them all.

We probably all remember playing 'postman's knock' as children. This was a 'postman's bash' which will be remembered for a very long time to come!



Sue & Keith, main architects of the surprise party, with victim Dave and co-conspirator Jan