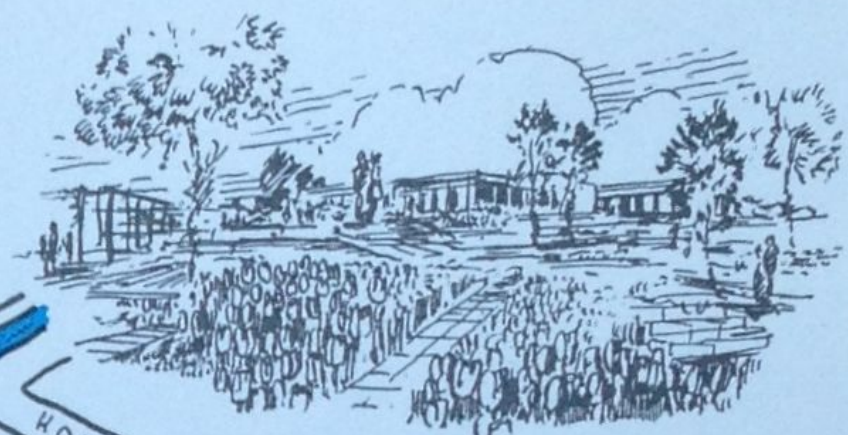
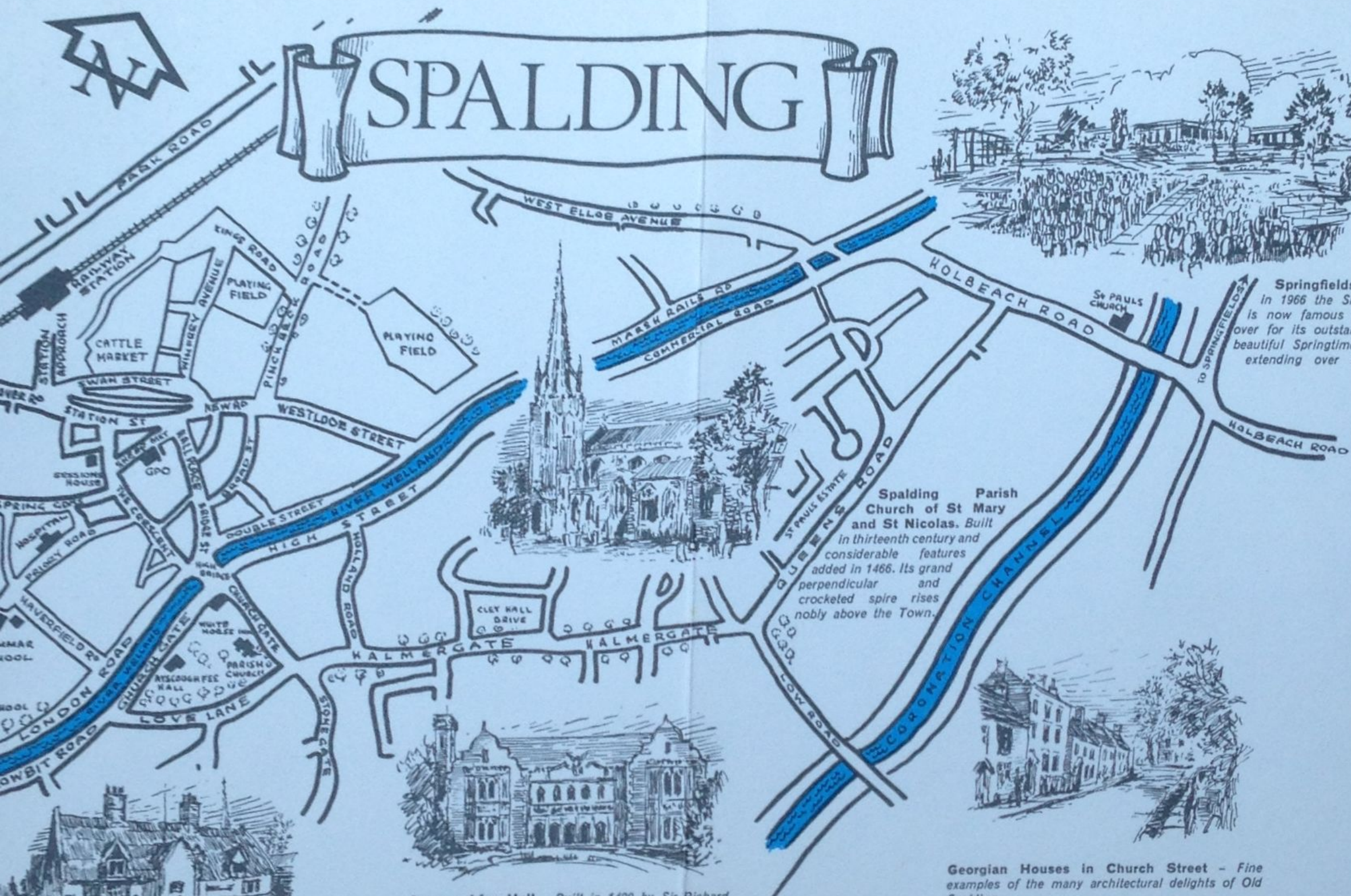




*SPALDING IN
SPRINGTIME*



SPALDING



Springfields - Opened in 1966 the Showgarden is now famous the world over for its outstanding and beautiful Springtime displays extending over 22 acres.



Spalding Parish Church of St Mary and St Nicolas. Built in thirteenth century and considerable features added in 1466. Its grand perpendicular and crocketed spire rises nobly above the Town.



Ayscoughfee Hall - Built in 1420 by Sir Richard Alwyn and later restored in the Gothic Style. Contains many rare stained glass windows and houses a Museum of British Birds. Grounds contain fine gardens and ancient yew hedges.



Georgian Houses in Church Street - Fine examples of the many architectural delights of Old Spalding.



White Horse Inn - Picturesque and ancient building dating back to 1553 and originally a private residence.

A COLOUR GUIDE TO

*SPALDING IN
SPRINGTIME*



A SPRING COLOUR PUBLICATION BY
SPRING PHOTOGRAPHIC LTD, SPALDING

*Inside Front Cover picture – A colourful corner in Springfields.
Back Cover picture – A view from the Lake in Springfields towards
Fulney Church.*

Spalding in Springtime

Spalding has been the centre of the bulb industry in this country since it was first established towards the end of the nineteenth century. Today it has grown to such an extent that over 10,000 acres of bulbs are grown annually by some 1,400 growers. Not only has this industry brought prosperity to the town and surrounding area but it has given, through the media of the Tulip Fields, Flower Parade and Springfields, a Springtime Festival of unsurpassed beauty. Spalding is now firmly established amongst the leading tourist attractions of this and other countries throughout the world.

Visitors to the area are invariably surprised, not only by the flat landscape of the fens, but also by the intricate network of rivers, streams and dykes that drain the land. The engineering feat, by which Man drained, reclaimed and enclosed nearly three-quarters of a million acres of fenland, began in the seventeenth century. Without this fenland miracle Spalding would still be virtually a marshland island and the bulb industry and Tulip Time, as we have come to know it, could never have been.

The Government of the day must have realised that there was much to be gained by drainage and in the year 1600 an Act was passed 'for the recovery and inning of drowned and surrounded grounds and the draining dry of watery marshes, fens, bogs, moors and other grounds of like nature'.

From Roman times unsuccessful attempts had been made to drain parts of the Fens. The small towns and villages were situated on the infrequent areas of higher ground forming small



Heading Tulips at Moulton Seas End near Spalding.

'islands' generally interconnected by high banks. Many local placenames prove this point.

Much of the credit for the drainage and reclamation of the land must go to a Dutchman, Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, who came to this country in the early seventeenth century. Vermuyden was responsible for draining some 307,000 acres of Fens known as the Bedford Level. This gave the necessary impetus to the complete drainage of the whole area, including the Parts of Holland, which was of the utmost importance, not only to

Spalding, but to the Economic and Social History of England. The 700,000 acres of swamp and marsh were consequently converted to highly fertile agricultural land.

Vermuyden was followed to this country in 1635 by fellow-countrymen and drainage engineers, Philibert and Abram Vernatti. Some years later Philibert, now Sir Philip Vernatts, undertook a great deal of the drainage in south Lincolnshire and in particular engineered the cutting of the famous Vernatts Drain which stretched from the mouth of the Welland, through Spalding, to Pode Hole.

The silt soils of the area around Spalding subsequently proved to be ideal for growing bulbs due mainly to their similarity in texture to soils in parts of Holland where bulbs are also grown

A Decorated Float passes Springfields in the Annual Flower Parade.





Flowering Almond in Springfields.

extensively. Comparisons which are frequently made between Spalding and the Netherlands reveal that there are many similarities. This area is officially known as the Parts of Holland in Lincolnshire, but this apart, the landscape, the soil, the bulb fields, the dykes, the character of the river and town, all could give the visitor the impression he was in a Dutch town. However, only a few hours car journey from the big cities and towns of this country, Spalding in Springtime offers England's own unique and charming Tulip Time Festival.

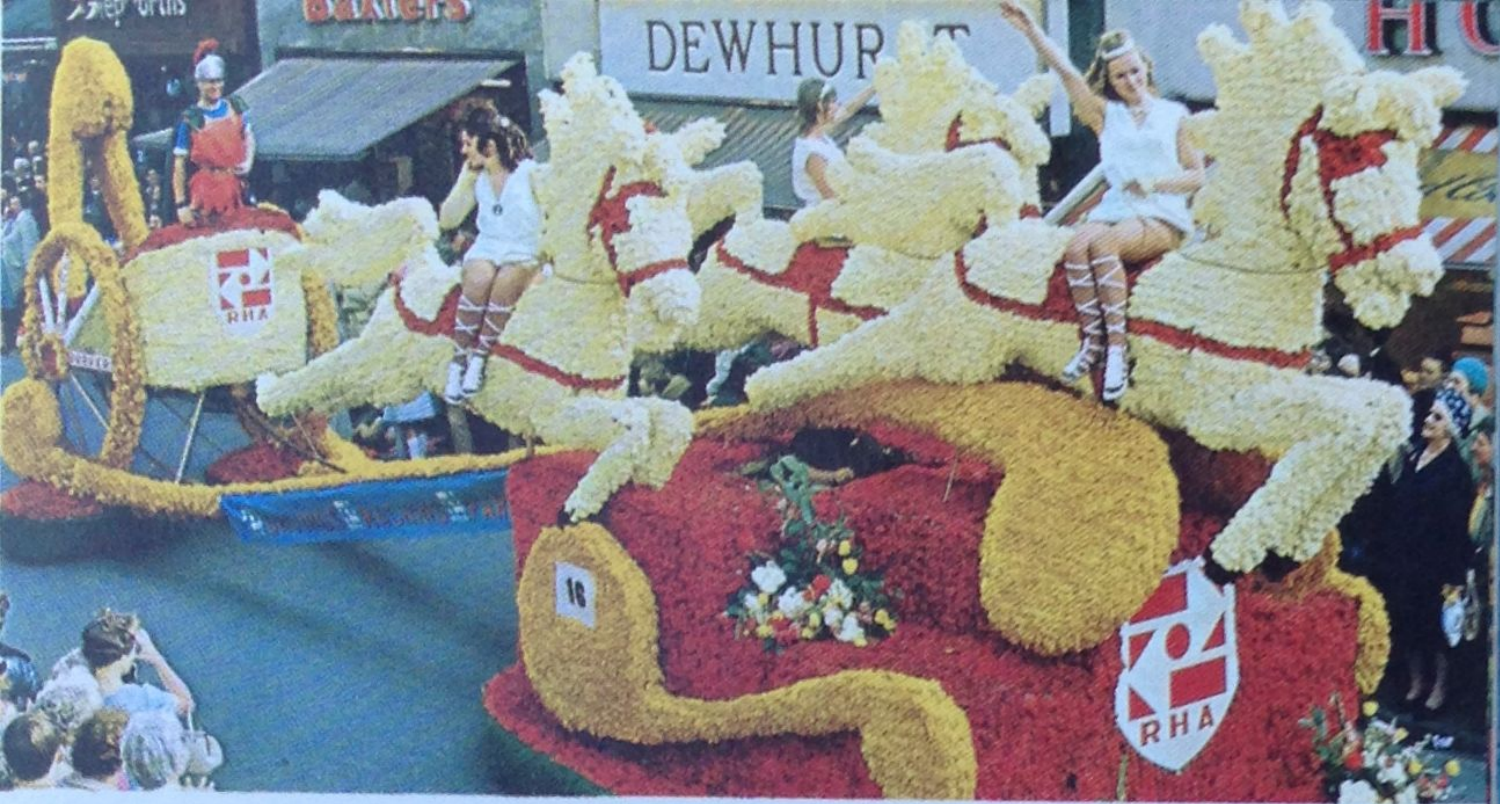
Commercial bulb growing started in this area in a small way about 1890. At this time the Darwin Tulip was introduced and its potential as a cut flower was soon realised. Within a few years

the first bulb-forcing experiments were to begin under glass. Among the many advances made over the years in bulb-forcing for cut flowers, probably the most important was the development of Cold Treatment. This treatment is given to certain varieties of Tulips and Daffodils in order to advance the internal development of the bud prior to planting.

The dry bulb trade which did not start until about 1918 really accelerated in 1930 and has continued to expand steadily ever since. The few acres of 1890 had grown to 3,700 acres by 1939 and continued to expand until it reached the present day figure in excess of 10,000. It is interesting to note that there are over 10,000 varieties of Daffodils and Narcissi registered with the

Some of the Decorated Floats which delighted the many visitors to Spalding on Flower Parade Day.





Royal Horticultural Society and over 3,000 varieties of Tulips in the official register.

In the 1920's and 1930's such was the acreage and variety of bulbs grown that in the Springtime the area surrounding Spalding became a feast of colour resembling a gigantic rainbow spanning the countryside for weeks on end. By word of mouth the fame of the Tulip Fields spread and the trickle of visitors grew yearly until 1935 when the King George V and Queen Mary Jubilee coincided with Tulip Time. The bulb growers, in celebration of the event, planted their fields with the emphasis on red, white and 'blue' tulips, and the resultant publicity brought Spalding and the Tulip Fields into the nation's spotlight.

The crowds that came in 1935 created many problems for the town, not the least of which was traffic. Coaches and cars literally caused chaos on the narrow lanes around the fields. Following this an official Tulip Time Committee was formed to plan a route for future years which would direct the traffic to the fields using a one-way system. The committee also took over the responsibility for other aspects of Tulip Time with particular emphasis on the problems created by the large numbers of visitors. A Tulip Queen competition was organised annually and the crowning of the Queen is performed just before the start of Tulip Time. In more recent years the title has been changed to Miss Tulipland but the name Tulip Queen is still used by the visitors who return each year to pay homage to the new 'Queen'.

Each year revealed a marked increase in the number of bulbs grown for the dry bulb trade as opposed to growing for flowers. It is an essential operation in growing such bulbs that the tulips are headed; i.e. the head removed from the stem whilst it is still in flower. This encourages a more rapid development of the new bulbs as well as preventing the petals falling on foliage, rotting, and possibly causing a disease known as 'Tulip Fire'.

Heading the tulips naturally shortens the visual life of a field especially when so often it was headed in its prime. Another problem was therefore created for the Tulip Time Organisers.



*Above The Restaurant in a Garden at Springfields.
Below Approaching the Garden Shop in Springfields.*



Although a Tulip field in full bloom was, and always will be, a sight to behold, within the space of a day a grower could turn a carpet of colour into a field of waving green stems and foliage – hardly a sight worth travelling many miles to see. Consequently some of the visitors were going to be disappointed with the Tulip Fields.

However, every cloud has its silver lining, so the saying goes and it was certainly true here. From the millions of Tulip flower-heads removed from the plants in full bloom was to start, in 1959, the 'Spalding Flower Parade'. Within a few years it was to become world famous and more popular than even the Tulip Fields themselves.

The Spalding Farmers Union, with admirable foresight, organised the Flower Parade. The Dutch artist A. W. van Driel was engaged to design the floats for the event and he, together with his son Kees van Driel, played a large part in the make-up of subsequent parades. The designs for the floats were magni-

Springfields – Glasshouses.





General view in Springfields.

ificent but it is true to say that such skill went into their making that the completed floats more than did justice to the original designs.

The initial form of the float is made by skilfully constructing a steel main frame into the outline shape of the subject, prior to carefully covering it with straw matting to form a base for the flowers. The final stage is reached twenty-four hours before the actual parade when hundreds of volunteers work into the night weaving the delicate patterns in flowers. Each Tulip-head is deftly secured to the straw matting with a wire pin until the whole float is literally covered with Tulips. A single float, which can be as much as fifty feet in length, may be decorated by as many as half a million Tulip heads. The result is one of indescribable beauty and it is not surprising that even visitors returning year after year still gasp with astonishment at the wonder of it all.

Within only three years of its inception the Parade had become

so famous that a quarter of a million people were coming to Spalding on Parade Day to line the three mile route. Soon the Organisers were to extend the Parade to include a four day static exhibition at which the floats could be examined in detail at a distance impossible to achieve on Parade Day. Unless there are exceptional weather conditions in any year the Parade is generally held on the second Saturday in May, with the static exhibition until the following Tuesday. Information including the actual dates of the Parade and Exhibition can always be obtained from: Spalding Flower Parade, Springfields, Spalding.

Even with the introduction of the Flower Parade the actual Tulip Fields remained as popular as ever. In the last weeks of April and early May many hundreds of thousands of people were touring the countryside around Spalding enjoying the view. For some of the visitors there were disappointments, perhaps a number of fields headed only a few hours before their visit. But from 1966 there would be no disappointments, for on 6 April, came the opening of Springfields – twenty-two acres of Spring showgardens. Now not only could every visitor be guaranteed a feast of flowers but the growers were provided with a shop window nearly twenty-two acres in size. Here was an idea that would surely provide Spalding with a tourist attraction which must exceed even the Tulip Fields and Flower Parade.

The idea of Springfields had been born some years earlier but it was not until 1964 that the idea began to become a reality. Under the sponsorship of the South Holland (Lincolnshire) Horticultural Association, specialist branch of the Holland (Lincs.) National Farmers Union, a company was formed to administer Springfields. With the assistance of grants and many loans and gifts received from bulb growers and ancillary trades the newly formed company was able to purchase a site of twenty-two acres at Fulney only a mile from the centre of the town. The next stage was to engage a landscape architect. Here the Directors were fortunate enough to obtain the services of Mr C. van Empelan who had been the architect for the famous Stirling Forest Gardens near New York, U.S.A.

Early in 1965 work started on the site at Fulney with a scheduled opening for April 1966. It looked an impossible task for in this time an open field was to be transformed into a magnificent garden planted with a million bulbs. By the opening day it was miraculously all finished – sweeping expanses of lawn – two-and-a-half miles of pathways – 8,000 square yards of paved area – lakes and fountains – model gardens – pergolas – a sunken garden – a colonnade – a woodland garden – thousands of trees and shrubs and a host of other features, not the least of which was the million bulbs ready to break into a profusion of colour and beauty. In addition a first-class restaurant was opened together with a self-service refreshment hall to cater for the every need of visitors. A large Garden Centre provides for the

Looking towards the Lake in Springfields.



needs of all gardeners, whilst souvenirs or gifts can be purchased from an excellent gift shop. The requirements of the photographer have not been forgotten, and ample coach and car parking facilities are available within a few yards of the entrances. Probably the most popular feature of the gardens is the display in the extensive glasshouses. Here the visitor is treated to a dazzling display of Tulips brought on earlier by the protection of the glass and flowering from early in April until the middle of May.

Every year new features and interest are added to Springfields notably the model windmill, the aviary and the Garden in the Glasshouse.

Following the opening of Springfields its fame was soon to spread and from the first year visitors came, not only from all over Great Britain, but from almost every part of the world. Springfields was a success and the public loved it. Normally Springfields opens from early April until the third week in May.

An Island Garden – Springfields.





Altar at Long Sutton Parish Church during Flower Festival.

Information concerning opening times and other facilities can be obtained by writing to: Springfields, Spalding, Lincolnshire.

Not the least of Spalding's Springtime attractions are the many Church Flower Festivals held during Tulip Time. These Thanksgiving Festivals have become famous in their own right

and many of the visitors to Spalding and its environs take time out to see the magnificent decorations in many of the churches. The Festivals take on a variety of forms and there are upwards of twenty Church Flower Festivals taking place in and around Spalding during Tulip Time. Many fine displays have been seen in the Long Sutton Parish Church – a picture of the Altar taken during a festival is shown on page 15.

Spalding has many other features which are equally attractive in the Springtime as at other seasons of the year. In this area can be found many interesting buildings and churches far too numerous to list in full in this book. The sketches shown on our Spalding map on the inside front cover show a few of the buildings that delight the eye on a walk through the streets.

The Colonnade – Springfields.



Ayscoughfee Hall, once the home of Maurice Johnson, the Parish Church with its handsome spire steeple, the ancient White Horse Inn overlooking the river at High Bridge, Priors Oven dating back to 1230, and many examples of houses and buildings of Georgian, Tudor or Florentine origins.

By the end of May the last of the late Tulips are flowering and the final visitor has reluctantly departed. Spalding out of Springtime is gradually returning to a quiet but thriving Fenland town. However, already plans are being discussed to take Spalding and its visitors from our next inevitably drab winter into a Spalding in Springtime even more colourful and beautiful than the last.

*Colour Slides and Colour Cine Films showing the full beauty
and colour of Spalding in Springtime
Details from : Spring Photographic Ltd
Springfields, Spalding*

