

FROM DREAM TO REALITY – From the Valley Artisans’ Co-op Opens

A retail outlet for crafts – From the Valley Artisans’ Co-op opened its doors in Deep River on May 1st. From that cold January day when a small group met at Peggy Askey’s home to talk about such an endeavour, to the reality of the shop’s opening on a bright May morning, there have been so many ups and downs of spirit.

Many came to our weekly meetings. Some felt our ambitions were much too high and the cost too great to meet their needs and subsequently dropped out. Others joined the group bringing new enthusiasm and resolve. In the final group of twelve who formed the core group there was always someone who bolstered our flagging spirits when governmental and administrative obstacles overwhelmed the group.

This core group consists of Audrey Burn, Neil Burn, Paddy Chapman, Trish Goss, Ligita Gulens, Karen Haddon, Hazel Herriot, Marion Leckie, Maija Moeck, Irene McKee, Elaine Rolston, Shirley Santone, and Nancy Thibeault.

They have committed themselves to share the stocking of the shop, the staffing, and the financial running of the business. The shop also takes in crafts on consignment.

As we operate on a completely democratic basis, the work of each new proposed consignee is voted on at our meetings and even though it may be considered something which will sell, if we feel that it is in any way “tacky” or it does not fit in with our other items or enhance our stock, or that it is too similar to the craft of those paying the expenses of the shop, it will not be accepted. A more delicate situation is the censuring of each other’s work. Since we strive for quality products in our shop we reserve the right to be (hopefully) constructively critical of each others’ things; equally important we are supportive of each other.

Creativity cannot exist or be produced in a vacuum. There is something very rewarding and educational about working with craftsmen of another medium as well as your own. The responsibility we have felt towards each other has inspired us to get on with our own crafts, to create even better quality, and to “hang in there” until the business became established.