

# **PITSTONE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 18 MAY 2000 AT PITSTONE GREEN MUSEUM**

### **PRESENT:**

Mike Sear (Chairman) John Wallis (Treasurer) Norman Groom (Museum Manager) David Lindsey (Watermill Manager) Jean de Selincourt (Publicity Secretary) Jeannette Wallis (Trading Secretary) Sue Lipscomb (Programme Secretary ) Gillian Arney (Archivist) Brenda Grace (Secretary) and seventeen members.

### **APOLOGIES WERE RECEIVED FROM:-**

Bob Rayner (Vice Chairman) Val Rayner (Crafts Co-ordinator), Mike and Jean Morris, David Goseltine, Geoffrey Stone, B. Wright and Don Levy.

### **MINUTES OF THE 1999 AGM WERE AGREED AND SIGNED**

### **MATTERS ARISING**

Nothing to report

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - Mike Sear**

The report had been sent to all members together with Agenda and Nomination Notice.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT - John Wallis**

The Society's funds have increased by £3199 during the year ending 31 March 2000. This was achieved by the General Fund + 168, Museum -91, Trading + 890 and Watermill + 2232. However, the latter did include the £1138 grant from PRISM.

### **General Fund**

Sadly attendance at our monthly meetings has fallen off dramatically and a consequent reduction of income of £99. Interest across funds is down in line with rates now being earned on our National Savings Income Bond. The cost of printing is now much lower since the purchase of a second-hand photocopier during the year.

Subscriptions paid are for our membership of South East Museums Service (SEMS) now called Southern Museums and the Association of Independent Museums (AIM). Without our membership of these professional bodies we would be unable to obtain grants and useful advice and help.

### **Museum Fund**

Admissions down by £278 due in the main to a very wet June/July Open Day, but we did save £493 by reducing our paid advertising.

Electricity down by £114, no explanation other than Ron not doing so much welding last year!

Museum sales 25% this is the allowance given to the museum for selling souvenirs, books etc., during the year. The remaining 75% appear in the Trading fund (£547).

### **Rent**

PLHS  
AGM 18.5.2000  
BJG

Our rent is calculated on a formula based on a percentage of admission receipts for the previous year (i.e. £200 rent/£2319 admissions)

### **Trading**

Shop sales at the museum were disappointing last year (down £159) and the watermill a little better at £57 down. We have recently bought several different new lines of stock and so far this year sales are doing well, particularly from sales to children staying at the Youth Hostel.

### **Watermill Fund**

Comments re Admissions, Interest Received and Rent will be as for the museum. Already have mention the grant from PRISM.

It was proposed by Gillian Arney and seconded by Don Brooks and carried to accept the Treasurer's Accounts and Report.\_

### **MUSEUM REPORT - Norman Groom**

Once again we have a rather 'upbeat' report for the museum. Each year we make considerable advances in improving the museum in the eyes of the public and this last year was no exception. The downside of course is that we spend more than we earn and this is likely to continue for some years to come, unless we can improve on our income.

We did however manage to reduce our deficit over that of last year and we could have made a modest profit, if it had not rained all day, on one of our Family Fun Open Day's.

Changes in refreshment arrangements have been made and we now provide refreshments on the Bank Holiday Mondays to boost our income considerably, as did the income from the shop and the plant stall, indeed all the open days ran very smoothly, thanks to all the hard work put in by our team of volunteers and helpers. There are so many people involved in creating what has been a successful year, that I would be here all night naming them, but I am sure you know who they all are.

All through the closed season our team of volunteers were busy with various projects, all of which have been detailed in the newsletter reports. Two of the biggest projects has been the reconstruction of the print room and the installation of the printing equipment, the second big project being the re-roofing of the Black Shed and the restoration of the water pump, chaff cutter and several grain mills. The floor of the shed needs further attention but when all is completed it should provide a quite impressive exhibition area.

The science room has proved very popular and donations resulting from visits by a few individuals has paid for consumables for our photocopier. In spite of the problems with the copier, due to storing paper in our damp environment, it does appear to be success, judging by the packets of paper we have used. As well as saving money it also saves people running around trying to obtain photocopies.

One other activity that is slowly building up, is the use of the museum by visiting clubs and other organisations in the summer evenings. Several visits have taken place over the last 12 months and we hope to continue with them and build on them for the future.

Now that we are in the 21st century, Mike, our Chairman, has created a museum website. I have also created my own website for the military side of the science room at the museum.

We are still at the learning stage but both sites are interlinked and also linked with data on 'thechilterns' website, a site that promotes other museums and places of interest in the area.

It is hoped in the near future these sites will give us additional free advertising.

I will now hand over to Gill our Archivist so that she can give you a few details of her work at the museum.

#### **REPORT BY OUR ARCHIVIST- Gillian Arney**

My crew has restored the House and Home room, some items have been moved. We have tidied the area where the privies were and they are now rehoused. Mike and Jean Morris have been reassembling the Plumbers Shop. We have loaned to Diana Sear a collection of items for a school production of 'Oliver'. We have also helped with photo's and other items which have been used in the production of the Millennium Book - Pitstone 2000. Photos are often loaned by the Society. We will soon make some quiz sheets.

#### **PROGRAMME SECRETARY'S REPORT - Sue Lipscomb**

Since our last A.G.M. members have had the opportunity to attend a wide selection of interesting talks. These have included such varied subjects as John Hampden, Disraeli, Morris Dancing, local National Trust properties, Ancient Countryside of the Chilterns, Wendover Waterways and Hidden Bucks.

I have performed my usual analysis of the attendance figures and have discovered that we had an average attendance of 17, which is three fewer than the figure last year. I wonder whether it is significant that the two meetings with the least support were in the Old School, Ivinghoe. Maybe people do not like a change of venue. Perhaps that is something we should bear in mind when we consider whether to hold more meetings at Pitstone Museum.

I am always delighted when our own members offer to give talks and organise quizzes and give special thanks to John Greenwell, Andrew Gould, John Wallis and David Lindsey.

I find I have very variable and unpredictable amount of support for visits I organise. Members seemed to enjoy the visit to Redbournbury Watermill and the walk around Historic Tring. However, my planned coach trip to Hampton Court sadly had to be cancelled because of lack of support. The recent visit to Halton House was, as those members who attended would testify, a resounding success.

Finally, I do respond to members suggestions, regarding forthcoming events, so please, please do tell me what you want.

#### **WATERMILL - David Lindsey**

**1.** He began by recording the sad death of Richard Jellis of Ford End Farm Ivinghoe in December last year. The running of the farm has now been taken over by his son Paul, although the legal formalities have not yet been completed.

**2. 1999 Visitor Season** : As indicated this time last year, the season began very well but unlike 1998, tended to tail away.

(1) **Sundays and Bank Holidays** : 28 openings drew 1371 visitors - a 12½% reduction on 1998. Highlight - National Mills Day with 184, one short of the all time record (August B.H. 1998)

(2) There were no adult parties : a big disappointment.

(3) School parties : 1658 children + adults - (19% fewer than 1998) of whom 732 (44%) came from Dell Farm and 250 (15%) from the Chiltern Study Centre.

(4) Sales : gross takings (excluding flour) were down 24% to £403.

(5) Summary : a little disappointing, but even so, not an unsuccessful year.

**3. Milling** : Eight demonstrations during which we milled nearly ½ tonne wheat (Hereward, grown on a farm near Caddington) and produced 277 1½ kg bags flour (415.5 kg). Sold for £222, again making a handsome profit. As reported last year, milling is always popular with the flour in great demand.

#### **4. Repairs, Restoration, Maintenance etc..**

As usual, much routine work has taken place, but there were three major projects:-

(1) Spurwheel cogs : had been replaced in March 1999 by a millwright but unfortunately the blanks were not sufficiently dry with the result that, once they were in place, they shrank and became loose. This meant that during the year we had to spend much time repacking the ones that had come loose, in all 190. The millwright has promised to return later this year to make good.

(2) Spillway : retaining wall has been completely rebuilt. Thanks to Roy Cutler, the bricklayer.

(3) A new hut has been bought and erected outside the mill compound but with access from it. The hut is used for the storage of all types of materials to avoid having them in the mill.

#### **5. Website**

We now have a website for the mill :- [www.thechilterns.co.uk/fordend.html](http://www.thechilterns.co.uk/fordend.html)

#### **6. Conclusion**

The mill continues to be a great asset to the Society and work on its upkeep and running has continued. Many thanks to all who have helped. B. Wright, Geoff Eccles and John Wallis with school parties. John and Bob Simpson with maintenance etc.,

On an optimistic note three people have expressed an interest in helping at the mill - a local resident who is an historian, a Dutchman from Bicester and a mill enthusiast from Hemel Hempstead - he has already helped twice at the mill when open.

#### **PUBLICITY SECRETARY'S REPORT - Jean de Selincourt**

There are no great difference to report this year, but we have managed to increase publicity in most areas - visitors, of course, are really our life-blood.

We continue to have free 'diary' entries in ten local newspapers, with paid advertisements in the Bucks Herald and Leighton Buzzard Observer for the Family Fun and Craft Days. We also contact five local radio stations and Channel 4 Teletext. It is always worth sending press releases and asking for press photographers to come along. You may have seen the Watermill picture, organised by David Lindsey, in last week's Gazette - and this led to David being interviewed by John Pilgrim on 'Three Counties Radio' just before National Mills Day.

Leaflet distribution continues to expand - the list of outlets now covers four sheets of A.4 paper. The most important one of course is Libraries (in all three counties) and Tourist Information Centres (Fifteen of these locally) Local shops, pubs, other museums, covering a wide area, Open Farms and many other tourist attractions all receive our leaflets. The new design on stiffer paper and a more appropriate size are proving a great success. A.4 size posters are displayed especially before the Family Fun and Craft Days and this year for May for the Watermill. These go to local shops and notice boards in Tring, Berkhamsted and villages around.

PLHS  
AGM 18.5.2000  
BJG

A special thank you is due to those members who take supplies of leaflets and posters for their own locality - surrounding villages are mostly covered in this way but further offers would be gratefully accepted.

Nearby Parish newsletter editors receive our newsletter and also use an innovation suggested by Val Rayner last year - printing a free entry ticket in one edition each season - this makes an eye catching feature too.

We have had the usual entries in A.V.D.C leaflets - their quarterly Events List and their annual map guide, for which we pay a fee. We contact various appropriate magazines both local - e.g. "Bucks Countryside", and national e.g. "This England" as well as assorted tourist and events publications - but we are always on the look out for more. Suggestions always welcome.

The Bucks Museum Network has now been set up and produced recently large numbers of leaflets but only covering single dates for Museum and Mill. It is early days and hopefully these will be more practical in future.

References on the World-wide Web on the Internet go on increasing of course. For example, both mill and farm museum are on 'thechilterns.co' with many pages and lots of colour photographs. But more recently, Norman Groom has produced the Museum's very own site and 'links' should find us for anyone 'searching' for rural attractions to visit in reality.

Last, but absolutely not least, I am delighted to say that Anne Ball from Drayton Beauchamp has offered to take on the publicity. We have been working together now for several months and it will be a pleasure to hand over to someone who is obviously going to be wonderfully competent and I would voice thanks to her from all of us.

Following Jean's report Mike thanked her on behalf of the Society for her hard work as Publicity Secretary.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

		<b><u>Proposed by</u></b>	<b><u>Seconded by</u></b>
<b><u>Chairman</u></b>	Mike Sear	Jean de Selincourt	Ian Walls
<b><u>Vice Chairman</u></b>	Bob Rayner	Don Brooks	Ann Ball
<b><u>Treasurer</u></b>	John Wallis	Mike Sear	Andrew Gould
<b><u>Secretary</u></b>	Brenda Grace	Sylvia Andrews	Andrew Gould

The rest of the Officers and Committee were voted en bloc. with one exception, that of Publicity Secretary and Jean de Selincourt wished to step down.

Proposed by Ian Walls seconded by Andrew Gould.

<b><u>Museum Manager</u></b>	Norman Groom
<b><u>Watermill Manager</u></b>	David Lindsey
<b><u>Programme Secretary</u></b>	Sue Lipscomb

**Crafts**  
**Co-ordinator**

Val Rayner

**Trading Secretary**

Jeannette Wallis

**Publicity Secretary**

Anne Ball

Proposed by Jean de Selincourt  
Seconded by Brenda Grace

**Independent Examiner**

David Hardwick

Proposed by Norman Groom  
Seconded by Malcolm Lee

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF SOCIETY'S NAME TO PITSTONE AND IVINGHOE MUSEUM SOCIETY.**

Following this item in the recent Newsletter, correspondence has been received from members with suggestions of alternative names for the Society.

After some discussion it was decided in principle to change the name, but this to be taken to the next Executive Committee Meeting.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

John Wallis appealed to members to help him in taking round school parties at the Museum. He would like to recruit other people, for when he is not available.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Following the meeting David Lindsey spoke on 'Ubiquitous Wire'.