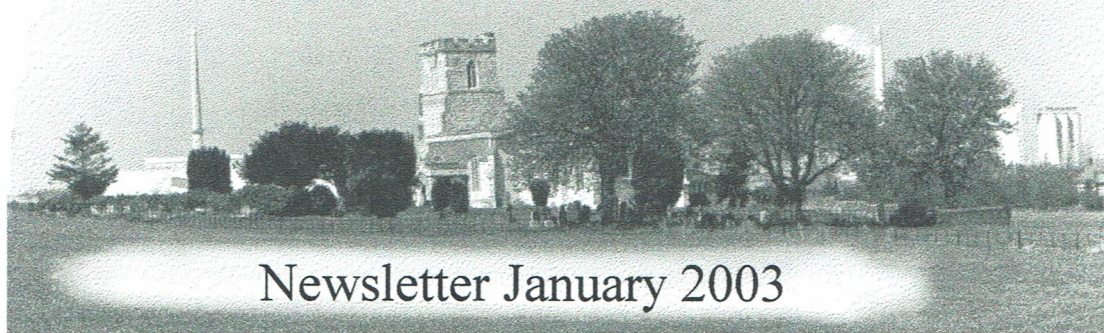


Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society



Newsletter January 2003

Chairman's note

A happy New Year to everybody reading this newsletter. Membership of the Society is growing so more people come to the Monthly Meetings and there are more volunteers at the museum than ever but it could all go horribly wrong if we cannot find a way of organising the catering on Open Days. Please read Norman's article carefully and if you can help in any way please come to the meeting. If you do feel like taking on the whole job that would be even better. This year is our fortieth birthday. We will celebrate it at the 'Cheese and Wine and Antiques' evening in June. We are also celebrating by holding Monthly Meetings in a room of our own at the museum. This will not happen till May as the weather defeats all attempts to create a car park opposite the cart sheds.

With this newsletter you will find a notice of an EGM to finally sort out the Constitution. There is one outstanding clause concerning trustees and the need to appoint two new trustees. Any comments to me please before the meeting

In April Subscriptions are due. Please could you make a note to pay yours to Corral whose address is at the end of this letter during April or come to the first Museum Day on 21st April and pay it then. Another newsletter is not guaranteed as we need a new editor. Any aspiring newsletter editors please apply to me. It is mostly a job of collecting the information and getting it all into the same format.

Museum and Watermill 'Open Days' for 2003 are listed at the end of this newsletter

Catering 2003

As you will have seen from previous Newsletters we have to reorganise the catering this year as Helen Hickson wishes to retire from the task. It looks unlikely that we will find anyone who will undertake the whole organisation as Helen did, so we are trying to break the task down into small packages that hopefully individuals will undertake. This has been tried in a small way in 2002 and proved reasonably successful. We are going to organise a meeting amongst all the present catering volunteers and invite any other society member along who may be willing to help (gentlemen as well). Please come along if you can, there will be no commitment on your part and you are welcome even if you just have ideas and can not participate directly. The meeting will be held in the new meeting room on **Saturday morning the 8th February at 10.00 am.** To give you an idea of how the system may function a list of proposed tasks follows. These may be amended as a result of discussion at the meeting.

The following tasks are proposed:-

1) Organisation - To contact a list of people who would be prepared to help during the season. To book those people in on the appropriate day and to contact several days before to ensure they will attend. The use of

a computer is not required, pre-printed circular letters or any other paperwork can be provided if required. A list of individuals who can help will also be provided, the task can be carried out from home in the early months of the year and it will not require attendance on any of the open days.

2) Cleaning prior to each open day. Written or verbal details to be provided of tasks to be carried out. Probably the most suitable day is the Thursday prior to the open day but this can be varied to suit the individual.

3) Purchase of food and drink. - A detailed list of standard items to be provided and the place where they can be purchased from. Delivery of perishable items on the day. The list to be amended against a stock list prepared following the previous open day.

4) Organiser for the open day - An experienced person to be available to act as catering manager. Verbal training to be given to such a person if required. If feasible written instruction to be available. This to include both collecting and returning all items to the appropriate museum storage area.

5. Helpers on the open day,. To help in either the preparation , serving or collecting the money. Instruction to be given by the day manager.

6) A stock check to be carried out prior to the following open day and a list passed to the purchaser for the following day.
If you have any question or queries prior to the meeting then contact either myself - Norman Groom, Museum manager 01582 605464 or Brenda Grace - Secretary 01296668167

Programme 2003

The venue for the first three months will be a meeting room in the Millennium extension of Pitstone Memorial Hall beginning at 8pm
From May onwards we shall use the new

meeting room in Pitstone Green Museum.

Thursday 20th February * The History of the Leighton Buzzard Railway**

This railway, known as "England's friendly little line" has been running since the First World War. Built originally for the sand industry of Leighton Buzzard, it has for the last 35 years, been run as a leisure concern, giving much pleasure to all its visitors. Colin Bassett will be giving this evening's talk, assisted by Douglas Kempton showing the video and slides.

Thursday 20th March * Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Pitstone**

Julia Wise is one of the county archaeologists and is based in County Hall, Aylesbury. This evening she is coming to talk to us about the work of the County Archaeological Service in Bucks in general. Julia has had recent experience of fieldwork at Pitstone and would also like to talk about possible early Saxon settlement remains here.

Thursday 17th April * Oliver Cromwell and his Family**

John Hunt is a retired auctioneer who has been fascinated by Cromwell for almost 50 years. He is a member of the Cromwell Society and should be a fascinating speaker.

Thursday 15th May * The Role of the RBST in the 21st century *** Pitstone Green Museum**

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust is based in the National Agricultural Centre in Warwickshire. Rosemary Mansbridge, their Chief Executive will be talking to us this evening and showing slides to illustrate in more details the work of the Trust.

Thursday 19th June * 40th Birthday - Celebrate with Cheese, Wine & Antiques *** Pitstone Green Museum**

This year is PIMS' 40th birthday and what better way to celebrate than to repeat the format of last year's successful 'Cheese, Wine

and Antiques' at the Museum? Stephen Hearn will be there to help us enjoy the evening with his informative and amusing valuations. There will be more details in the next newsletter, but in the meantime, please pencil this into your diary!

Sue Lipscomb, Programme Secretary



**BESS - ON THE MILL (10)
: MILL NOISE (no, not the Boss!)**

I have often heard visitors remarking how quiet the mill is when it's working. With my sensitive ears, I can tell you that this is deceptive. In fact there are lots of separate noises which are important to the miller and which he learns to identify and interpret. His ears have to become as sharp as mine. According to the Boss, a miller in a modern high technology mill relies on various gauges and dials and a computer in his control room to tell him what is going on. He can even put things right with the computer.

That's not the case in our mill. The miller has to listen to every noise made by each part of the machinery which tells him whether the mill is working well or not. If not, he has to go and investigate. The amount of whoosh of water over the wheel indicates how far the sluice gate has been opened and thus how fast the wheel is turning and hence the speed of the runner stone. This is confirmed by the rat-tat-tat of the damsel since it is driven by the same spindle.

Then there is the rumble of the stones. This changes according to their speed, their distance apart (called the 'nip') and how much grain is being fed to them. This last is determined both by the angle of the shoe (which guides the grain into the millstones) and by how much the shoe is being vibrated by the damsel. The faster the rat-tat-tat, the more grain is being fed to the stones. If the rumble is not 'right', then the shoe has to be adjusted, the nip changed or even the sluice

gate has to be opened or closed more to alter the speed of the wheel and hence the runner stone. If this is done, it might mean readjusting everything again.

Another important noise is that made by the wooden cogs as they mesh with the iron teeth. If it is not even or becomes unhealthily 'sharp', then something could be wrong or about to go wrong. It has to be checked quickly as a problem may cause the wooden cogs to be 'zapped' off, which will bring the mill to a very alarming noisy halt!

There is however, a noise device to help the miller. This is the bell fixed above the damsel and held out of contact with it by means of a belt held down by the weight of grain in the feed hopper. When the grain is running out, the loss of weight releases the belt which allows the support for the bell to be struck by the damsel and so set it ringing. The miller has to come post haste to fill the hopper with grain otherwise the stones would run dry - the rumble would be more of a scraping sound - and there will be an awful smell of burning flour. It's no wonder the Boss gets a bit het up when we're milling! Even so, he still says it's good fun and the visitors enjoy it. I find it is sometimes better to keep out of his way!

Last year 743 visitors came to the mill, which makes an average of 62 for each time it was open. The Boss is quite pleased as it compares very favourably with previous years. However, he is more pleased with the fact that we milled 185 x 1½ kg bags of flour, which, in old currency, comes to nearly 5½ cwt of flour (or, for the younger of you, 0.28 tonnes). Not bad really. The Watermill Committee - and I know what was said, 'cos "I was there" - has agreed that next year Open Days will be increased from 12 to 14. They can be summarised as: each 1st and 2nd Sunday and each Bank Holiday between Easter Monday and the end of September, with milling on 5, 11 and 26 May, 13 July and 25 August. This has been

made possible because several new volunteers have come forward.

The Committee also agreed to increase charges for parties to the mill. School parties will be 75p per pupil (no charge for adults or opening fee) with a minimum charge of £15. Adult parties will be £2 (no opening fee) with a minimum charge of £20. Admission on Sundays and Bank Holidays, and the price of a 1½ kg bag of flour will remain as at present i.e. £1.20 per adult, 40p per child and £1 per bag of flour.

Till next time,

Bess

PS The boss is very concerned that he has lost the phone number of a lady member who volunteered to help at the mill. If you volunteered and he has not rung you please get in touch with him.

Museum Report

Following the recent setback of losing the roof of the Black Shed, we are now slowly recovering in spite of the atrocious weather. The structure of the roof is now finished, we are awaiting the corrugated sheeting and most of the re-tiling of the Big Barn has been done.

The wet weather has been our biggest problem as most of the larger projects are outside jobs. The ground is so saturated that we are unable to move any of the larger items of equipment around the site. Reg Jellis is still working wonders in disposing of unwanted artefacts and Peter Keeley has organised the sale of a cart to Redbourn Village, together with a rather battered dough trough. Clearance of Jeff's workshop started although further clearance must take place before we have access. We have many items still to move to Jeff's barn but we are awaiting the disposal of a caravan before this can take place.

Reg Jellis has organised the felling of the old pear tree, that has to be taken down before we can rebuild the wall of Jeff's workshop. He has also arranged the disposal of the

many tons of scrap metal that is piled up outside Jeff's barn. David Goseltine and his team is fitting doors on William's shed next to the house, such that he can use it as a garage and store his machinery in it. The new grain barn has been almost cleared and unwanted items moved outside. These will either be disposed of or moved to Jeff's barn when possible. The cart sheds are empty and Peter has spent many hours spraying the roof beams with creosote, this should soon be completed. The roof over the rack saw is now finished although the paving around the Nissen Hut door has still to be tackled.

Several smaller repair jobs and restoration projects have been completed but many more await. Electrical work is an ongoing task and Peter has purchased a number of PIR detectors and lights to improve safety when attending the museum in the evenings. The drainage ditch that was excavated at the rear of the museum has just filled up with water, seriously delaying the completion of the parking area.

We have been involved in some small scale filming work a week or so before Xmas. This was for an information film for the legal profession, relating to agricultural property and they required agricultural backdrops for their presenter. The film company discovered us on the Internet, so our website has proved useful. We had 25 visits to our site last week which is about 5 times up on what it was 12 months ago, the total number now standing at over 1600.

I have recently added a reciprocal link to the Ivinghoe & Pitstone website.

With the help of Sandra, one of Gill's assistants, we are trying to put together a CD that will contain all the master documents of the society. These will be presented in the format of a web page and it will be a simple matter just to insert the disc into a computer and click on the mouse to access any document listed in the menus. It is hoped to extend this technique in the future to produce a CD with a collection of our better

photographs or other useful information that the public can access on the open days.

Norman Groom. Museum Manager

WEA

Flora and Fauna of the Chilterns.

Victor Scott will be tutoring a course on Bucks Wildlife beginning on Tuesday 4th March. Victor is an expert on the wild life of this area and an essential feature of this country side course will be the diversity of habitats throughout Buckinghamshire which provide a great variety of wildlife, especially on the chalklands of the Chilterns where some nationally rare species are perhaps more common than any where else in Britain. The course runs for 5 weeks the time is 7.30pm to 9pm and we meet in the Meeting Room at Pitstone Memorial Hall. There will also be a field trip at a date to be announced.

The fee for the course and field trip is £20. If you would like a syllabus for the course, please contact Marjorie Connolley on 01296 668719

REMINISCENCES OF PITSTONE (1)

John Ward of Hemel Hempstead sent us these pages after he had read Pitstone 2000

My mother was born at Pitstone in 1892. Her father was James Coker and her mother was Sarah, nee Shillingford, from Quainton, who, being unable to write her name, marked the birth certificate with a cross. My mother was christened Elizabeth Sarah but was usually called Betty or Lizzie. She attended the Pitstone school and the family album contains a coloured photograph of it postmarked 1911. Reference is made to three of the 32 Children in the picture, her brother Frank, and also to Minnie and Will, surnames unknown. I suppose my mother would have left school when she was about 13 years old, say 1905, so she may well be in the photograph of 1904 on page 23 of *On Pitstone Green There Is A Farm*.

When the crown imperials flowered in

my mother's garden she would often recall the May Day celebrations at Pitstone, saying that the garlands they made often had crown imperials on the top. I have some in my own garden in memoriam. I cannot however remember hearing her singing *The Pitstone May Song*, although she would often sing about the house, including some songs she had obviously learned at school: one started *Snowflakes, happy snowflakes floating through the air* and another *Jack Frost looked forth one still clear night, He said I'll soon be out of sight...* and also a verse or two of Tennyson's *Ring Out Wild Bells*. Her singing was much better than her spelling.

Postcards' help me to put together the family history. A very regular correspondent was Elsie Gregory who had been one of my mother's school friends and at that time was in service at Spencer House Aylesbury. By 1907 Betty Coker was in service with the Harrigan family of Charles Street Berkhamsted. Having attended the Berkhamsted Urban Evening Classes 1909-1910, she was awarded a cookery prize, *Mrs Beeton's Every Day Cookery*. It contains some interesting recipes, for example kangaroo tail soup, broiled larks, and blackbird pie. In the case of the latter it does not specify four and twenty blackbirds, leaving the quantity open, but it does state *average cost uncertain, blackbirds being seldom sold*. Presumably kangaroo tails were readily available!

A card of August 1910 indicated that Mr Harrigan had died which may have brought my mother's employment to an end for in May 1911 she was with Mrs Macbride at Berkhamsted - but not for long, for soon cards were addressed to Ship End Pitstone, and in December to Pitstone Vicarage. My mother had obviously been looking for new employment for a card from Annie, surname unknown, at Luton, said she had the address of a Registry Office she had found in a Luton paper where *"house maids, cooks and generals are wanted"* and she offered to accompany my mother to the Registry if she

wished. Perhaps, as a result of that my mother took up service in Harpenden. It was there about 1912 my mother met my father Herbert Ward, always known as Bert. He was a policeman at Harpenden. It would seem that the postal service was about the only way to contact someone in service as calling on the place of employment was not in most cases an option. The local postal service was first class. A card from my father postmarked 10.45am January 1913 carried the message *I will see you TONIGHT at 5.30pm in High Street ... another of April 1914 I would like to see you tonight.*

In July 1914 my mother and father were married by the Revd James G Evans in the church of St Mary's Pitstone. The witnesses were Alfred Goodyear and Ellen Isabella Coker, my mother's sister. Married life was soon interrupted. On 3rd August Germany declared war on France and on 4th August the British Government declared war on Germany. That day general mobilisation papers were sent to all army reservists. My father, who had served in the Royal Garrison Artillery and was on reserve, was instructed to report to Gosport on 6th August. From 10th August to 5th November he served as a medical orderly and for the rest of the war in France as an artillery man (to be continued)

Museum Opening Times **From 11.00a.m - 5.00p.m**

Craft and Family fun Days

8th June, 13th July, 10th August,
14th September

Craft fair, Tractor rides Country
dancing etc.

Museum Days

Easter Monday 21st April
Bank Holiday Mondays - 5th May,
26th May, 25th August

**Adults £3 children £1.50 Members
of PIMS free.**

Committee

Chairman and Archivist Gillian Arney 63
Cheddington Rd Pitstone LB Beds LU7 9AQ

01296 668123

Treasurer John Wallis Hazel Bank Groomsby
Drive Ivinghoe L B Beds LU7 9ER 01296 661997

Secretary Brenda Grace 20 Wellcroft Ivinghoe L B
Beds LU7 9EF 01296 668167

Museum Manager Norman Groom 39 Periwinkle
Lane Dunstable Beds LU6 3NP 01582 605464

Deputy Museum Man Peter Keeley 96 The
Park Redbourn Herts AL3 7LT 01582 792701

Watermill Manager David Lindsey 11 Morland
Close Dunstable Beds LU6 3QB 01582 600391

Craft co-ordinator Val Rayner 94 Vicarage Road
Marsworth Tring Herts HP23 6AT 01296 661967

Programme Secretary Sue Lipscomb The
Surprise Buckland Wharf Aylesbury Bucks HP22 5LQ
01296 630578

Publicity Secretary Anne Ball Broadview
Drayton Beauchamp Bucks HP22 5LU 01442 822672

Trading Secretary Jeannette Wallis Hazel Bank
Groomsby Drive Ivinghoe L B Beds LU7 9ER
01296 661997

Membership Secretary Corral McCormack 32
Maud Janes Close Ivinghoe L B Beds LU7 9ED (Not
on Committee) 01296 662560

Watermill Opening Times

From 2.30 - 5.30p.m.

Easter Monday 21st April,

— Sundays - 4th May, (M)11th May

(National mills day), 1st June, 8th

June, 6th July, (M)13th July, 3rd

August, 10th August, 7th September

(National Heritage Day)

Bank Holiday Mondays - (M)

5th May, (M)26th May,

(M)25th August,

M= Milling demonstrations from

3-5p.m. Approx.

Adults £1.20, Children (5-15) 40p

Members of PIMS free

PITSTONE & IVINGHOE MUSEUM SOCIETY

E.G.M. 20.02.2003

To be held at 8.00pm in the Millennium Room at Pitstone Memorial Hall.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Amendment to the Constitution – Clause 5g paragraphs 1 and 2 (Trustees)
3. To ratify the appointment of two Trustees:- Messrs R G Jellis and J W Wallis

Constitution 1991 (extract)

g) Trustees

There shall be not more than four Trustees of the Society. The first Trustees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and any freehold or leasehold property which may from time to time be owned by the Society shall be vested in them to be dealt with by them as the Committee shall direct by resolution (of which an entry in the Society's minutes shall be conclusive evidence). The Trustees shall be indemnified against risk and expense by the Society, in such manner as the Society shall decide. The Trustees shall hold office until death or resignation or until removed from office for any reason which may seem sufficient to a two thirds majority of members present at a General Meeting of the Society.

Where by reasons of any such death, resignation or removal it shall appear necessary to the Society that a new Trustee or Trustees shall be appointed or if the Society shall deem it expedient to appoint an additional Trustee or additional Trustees the Society shall by resolution nominate the person or persons to be appointed the new Trustee or Trustees. For the purpose of giving effect to such nomination the Chairman for the time being is hereby nominated as the person to appoint new Trustees of the Society within the meaning of Section 36 of the Trustees Act 1925 and he shall by deed duly appoint the person or persons so nominated by the Committee as the new Trustee or Trustees of the Society and the provisions of the Trustee Act 1925 shall apply to any such appointment.

New paragraphs

There shall not be more than four trustees or less than two of the Society. The first Trustees shall be appointed by the Committee and any freehold or leasehold property which may from time to time be owned by the Society shall be vested in them to be dealt with by them as the Committee shall direct by resolution (of which an entry in the Society's minutes shall be conclusive evidence).

The Trustees shall be indemnified against risk and expense by the Society, in such manner as the Society or the Committee shall decide. The Trustees shall hold office until death or resignation or until removed from office for any reason which may seem sufficient to a two thirds majority of members present at a General meeting of the Society.

Where by reasons of any such death, resignation or removal it shall appear necessary to the Committee that a new Trustee or Trustees be appointed or if the Committee shall deem it expedient to appoint an additional Trustee or additional Trustees the Committee shall by resolution nominate the person or persons to be appointed the new Trustee or Trustees. This appointment to be ratified by a special resolution presented to the Society at an AGM or EGM. For the purposes of giving effect to such nomination the Chairman for the time being is hereby nominated as the person to appoint new Trustees of the Society within the meaning of Section 36 of the Trustees Act 1925, and he shall by deed duly appoint the person or persons so nominated by the Committee as the new Trustee or Trustees of the Society and the provisions of the Trustees Act of 1925 shall apply to any such appointment.