

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society



Newsletter April 2004

Membership Fees

2004-2005 Subscriptions

Please can I remind everyone that membership is now due. The fees as from 1st April 2004 are £5 for concessions and £6 per person (family membership no longer exists). The changes in these fees were explained in the last newsletter.

Please renew your subscription promptly as it does make the work somewhat easier and we do not have to send out a reminder. A subscription slip is attached to this Newsletter.

Many thanks

Corrall McCormack

Membership Secretary.

Programme 2004

All meetings are held in the Education Room in the Pitstone Green Museum at 8pm.

Thursday 15th April 2004 - Chenies Manor, its history and gardens

Valerie Edwards has been a guide at Chenies Manor since 1981. Her talk will give us an introduction to the history of the village of Chenies, to the people who lived in the house and take us through the seasons of the year in the garden. Chenies Manor gardens are famous for their tulips, so maybe this talk will prompt some of us to take a closer look at them this year.

Thursday 20th May 2004 -Tottenhoe Stone Mines

Barry Horne is a member of the Manshead Archaeological Society in Dunstable, and last spoke to the Society about the archaeology of Dunstable back in 1993. The Tottenhoe stone mines were used by the Romans and later for church building in the Middle Ages. Stone from here was excavated until the nineteenth century.

Thursday 17th June 2004 -Cheese and Wine at the Museum

The museum will be open at 7pm to allow members and their friends to look around, before the cheese and wine is served at 7.30pm. After coffee, we will be welcoming John Bailey, an authority on timber framed barns who will be talking about the very barn we are sitting in, referring to the woodworking techniques that would have been employed by the craftsmen who built it. The evening will cost £3.00 for members and £4.00 for their friends.

Thursday 19th August 2004 -A trip on the Leighton Buzzard Railway -

Please see information about this trip at the end of this newsletter. Please could you indicate your interest by contacting either myself, Sue Lipscomb or Brenda Grace. Phone numbers and addresses are under the committee list.

Chairman's Note

The Committee are pleased to welcome Kit Kite who has been co-opted onto the Committee as Vice Chairman. Kit is known to many of you as the man on the door at Open Days but he has a regular job working on the Museum catalogue in the office. He also has previous experience on other Committees.

Gillian Arney - Chairman

Museum Report –March 2004

I am happy to report progress on all fronts, albeit very slow progress on some tasks. The Nissen hut has been completely cleared for the third or fourth time since Jeff Hawkins passed away just over two years ago. The trouble has been that, as soon as it is cleared someone comes along and dumps more stuff inside. This time we were quick off the mark and as soon as it was cleared we arranged for Jim Andrews to bring his mini excavator and remove the chalk floor to a depth of 3 to 4 inches. Now it is awaiting a delivery of ready-mixed concrete for the new floor. It will then be lined with plywood, insulated with rockwool and the new electricity supply installed. The insulation is not to protect against the cold, but against the summer heat which becomes unbearable on a sunny summer day. It is unlikely that it will be finished for an exhibition area this year, but there is a good chance of a model railway working in there by June. The trouble is that the people who will do this work are the same people who are building the new store and workshop in the sheepyard and they can only do one job at a time. Until this workshop is finished the loose box in the chicken yard, currently a workshop and store, cannot be released as an exhibition area.

A great deal of work has been done on Jeff Hawkins old workshop and the large lathe has been repaired and cleaned. The room is almost ready for opening to the public but

work has slowed right down due to pressure of other work, particularly general site cleaning and tidying ready for the first open day which will be Easter Monday. Reg Jellis and his friend Joe are doing a great deal of cleaning up and enhancing a part of the site not previously tackled; the grain silo area. The grain pit, always an eyesore with accumulated rubbish and water, has been fitted with a false floor covering the bottom four feet of its depth and is now an area relatively simple to keep clean and tidy, apart from mess due to pigeons. There is still a great deal to do to render the area pigeon proof, but progress is being made. Recent research has led to a lot of information being unearthed about the construction and use of the silos and it is the intention to produce a large information board describing this to visitors.

Norman Groom and Maurice Wingrove have been doing a lot of experimental and construction work building a sand blaster. We are now experiencing very encouraging results. This will hopefully lead to many more very rusty machines being restored and painted than has been considered economic. Jack Brantom is the man who is mainly involved in this with Norman keeping up a steady supply of sand blasted parts. Other large items which are long term restoration projects are coming along satisfactorily.

Rebuilding of the gable end of the cart sheds has now been finished by Chris Wallis apart from fitting the already manufactured windows. He still has to tackle the repair of the side doors so it is unlikely that we can start turning the inside into an exhibition area until the autumn. Just as well as we have not yet decided what to place in there. One thought is to turn it into an old time carpenters shop similar to the adjoining farm workshop in such a way that it can be used as such when not open to the public. It would give space to show some of the many old carpentry tools currently stored in the loft above.

The flower bed at the end of the cart sheds, which has for long been unrecognisable as such, has been laboriously cleared and dug and now has been partly planted. We are going to try to grow the pear tree in this bed, which is still alive after felling for Chris Wallis's work, into an espalier against the newly repaired wall. We have nothing to lose, and we could gain an annual crop of fruit.

This summer the doors around the reception yard are due for painting, a relaxing pastime on a warm summer day. Anyone with an hour or two to spare who fancies him/herself with a paintbrush would be very welcome; talk to Norman or me.

Peter Keeley, Deputy Museum Manager

Bess - On The Mill (13)



It seems a long time ago that we last chatted - September 2003 actually as there wasn't any space left for me in January's 'Newsletter' as the Boss had used up so much for his 'Annual Report'! Well as you can imagine, things don't stop happening.

You will know that during milling on August Bank Hol. last year the wedges securing the pit wheel came out and it slipped along its axle and hit the pit wall. After much effort over several weeks, the 'young 'uns' as the Boss calls Chris (Tring) and Bob (Buckingham) have hopefully managed to repair it at last (Sunday 14th March). They used 'JAWS', an ingenious device thought up by John and fabricated by Ron Ashurst which squeezes the pairs of wedges together from both sides at once which is easier than 'braying' them (Boss speak for hitting with a hammer). The Boss has now arranged a trial milling for Sunday 28th March, so we should be ready for the start of the season on Easter Monday.

The Boss was well pleased with the response for volunteers and he has sent all a copy of the Roster. The down side is we've

lost three: Don and Marjorie Brooks are about to leave Dunstable and move to Barnard Castle and Christine Loran is moving to Hereford from Aylesbury. So if you would like to help at the mill, or you know of someone who might, please let the Boss know (01582 600391).

As you know the Boss likes figures (!). John told him 1464 children accompanied by 160 adults had been to the mill last year, and when these were added to the Sundays and Bank Hols, the total for the year came to 2416, which is a tad lower than 2002. However, the amazing figure is that there have been more than 43,000 visitors to the mill since 1990 - over 3000 a year. Very encouraging for all concerned.

As I write, the wheat has not arrived yet for this year. When it does come, it will cost us over £200 a ton, but as we only need 350 kilos to add to what was left over from last year to top up the dustbins, it won't feel so bad.

The lease for the mill which was signed in April 1979 expires at the end of March. Paul Jellis the farmer and landlord has agreed to an extension until October 2005 so the Boss has drawn up a legal document to that effect and is now driving around Ivinghoe and Cheddington collecting witnessed signatures from the four holding trustees.

Other work has continued apart from the pit wheel. Bob Megson is making a new lower half for the mill door (the old one was badly rotten in places) and the new gable end shutter made by David Goseltine has been painted Ashridge red and fitted on the wheel side. Not without much trial and error, an inner perspex window has also been fitted so that when the shutter is open, it can be closed to let in light but not wind and rain.

Hope to see ALL of you at some time at t' mill this year.

✍ Bess

Pitstone Church Festival of Art and Flowers

29th May to 31st May 2004

St Mary's Church Pitstone will be open as below with:-

Works by local artists.

Flowers from the font to the altar

Music from local musicians

Saturday 2.00p.m. – 6.00p.m.

Sunday 11.00a.m. – 5.30p.m

Monday 11.00a.m. – 6.00p.m.

There will be Evensong at 6.00p.m. on Sunday

Other opening times

Sundays and Bank Holidays between May and September from 2.30p.m. – 5.00p.m.

The Tring & District Local History & Museum Society

PIMS would like to congratulate the Society on their new museum. After many years of searching they will be moving into the office building of the now defunct livestock market office and there will at last be a museum in Tring. Pitstone Green Museum has many items that really belong to Tring and we would be happy to lend them for display when space permits. As a taster here are some items that came from Clements Shop. John Clement was Jeff Hawkins's maternal uncle and when the shop was closed Jeff, as was his habit, collected many of the contents. The museum clock also came from the shop. Originally the Post Office clock on Tring High Street, John Clement had given it houseroom when it was no longer wanted there. Jeff had brought it on to the farm sometime later. We also have diaries and sermons that belonged to an earlier John Clement who was one of the founders of the New Mill Baptist Church. The diaries date from the early 19th Century. They are very erratically kept, mostly recording journeys made and sermons heard.

**Items from J.T.Clement & Son of Tring-
Watchmakers, Jewellers,
Silversmiths & Opticians**



Watch Case



Glasses Case and Envelope



**Lens box for Clements
Opticians Business**

Open Days 2004

Plants

Spares of self sown seedlings, rooted cuttings, baby plants, anything really are welcome and needed for the Plant Stall at Museum open days.

Contact Jean de Selincourt or leave at 9 Church Road Pitstone.

Tel. 01296 662151

Museum (open 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.)

12th April (Easter Monday) Museum Day

3rd May (B.H. Monday) Museum Day, Engine Rally and Models

31st May (B.H. Monday) Museum Day

13th June (Sun) Family fun & Craft Day

11th July (Sun) Family Fun & Craft Day

8th August (Sun) Family Fun & Craft Day

30th August (B.H. Monday) Museum Day

12th September (Sun) Family Fun & Craft Day

Admission costs

Adults £3 Children £1.50

Members free

Watermill (open 2.30 to 5.30 p.m.)

Milling demonstrations between 3.00 and 5.00 p.m. on days indicated by *

***12th April** (Easter Monday)

* **3rd May** (B.H. Monday)

***9th May** (Sunday) National Mills Day

23rd May (Sunday)

***31st May** (B.H. Monday)

13th June (Sunday)

27th June (Sunday)

11th July (Sunday)

25th July (Sunday)

8th August (Sunday)

22nd August (Sunday)

***30th August** (B.H. Monday)

12th September (Sunday) National Heritage Day

26th September (Sunday)

Admission costs

Adults £1.20 Children (5-15) £ 0.40

Members free

Committee:-

Chairman and Archivist Gillian Arney

63 Cheddington Rd., Pitstone, LB Beds.
LU7 9AQ Tel. 01296 668123

Vice Chairman Kit Kite

Honeysuckle Lodge, Groomsby Drive,
Ivinghoe, LB Beds. LU7 9ER
Tel. 01296 668918

Treasurer John Wallis Hazel Bank,
Groomsby Drive, Ivinghoe, LB Beds.
LU7 9ER Tel. 01296 661997

Secretary Brenda Grace 20 Wellcroft,
Ivinghoe, LB Beds. LU7 9EF
Tel. 01296 668167

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

Deputy Museum Manager Peter Keeley
96 The Park, Redbourn, Herts. AL3 7LT
Tel. 01582 792701

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

Craft Co-ordinator Gillian Loose
21 Albion Road Pitstone, LB Beds
LU7 9AY Tel 01296 668051

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

Publicity Secretary Anne Ball
Broadview, Drayton Beauchamp, Bucks.
HP 22 5LU Tel. 01442 822672

Trading Secretary Jeannette Wallis
Hazel Bank, Groomsby Drive, Ivinghoe,
LB Beds LU7 9ER Tel. 01296 661997

Other Officers:-

Membership Secretary Corral
McCormack 32 Maud Janes Close,
Ivinghoe, LB Beds. LU7 9ED
Tel. 01296 662560

Museum Website:-

<http://website.lineone.net/~pitstonemus>

Watermill Website:-

<http://www.fordendwatermill.co.uk>

The Home Guard were active in both Ivinghoe and Pitstone during the war. As usual village rivalry played its part. In this case it was caused by the possession of a machine gun by Pitstone Home Guard. The Pitstone headquarters were in the cart sheds at the museum. The door from there into the new room is still labelled 'OFFICERS' though no one can tell me what the room was like at the time. Fire watching took place on top of the silos at the cement

works which was very cold in winter. There was also a watch kept up on Pitstone Hill. If you walk along the top towards Aldbury Nowers you can still see the foxhole that they dug about half way along. From there they drew the map which is on display in the Microcosm at the Museum

The Rifleman was a Home Guard Magazine. These instructions however might come in handy.

From The Rifleman June 1941

**INSTRUCTIONS WHEN NOT UNDER DIRECT
MILITARY ORDERS.**

1. Dive bombers travel at more than 350 m.p.h., therefore **SPEED IS ESSENTIAL.**
2. The moment that bombs start to fall in the vicinity—**GET UNDER COVER.**
3. Any cover is better than none, *e.g.* :
 - (a) If you are in a building—**STAY THERE.**
 - (b) If you are on a road and it has a ditch beside it—**GET INTO IT.**
 - (c) If you are in a town and the street has a gutter—**LIE DOWN IN IT.**

In fact, flatten yourself behind anything that will deflect the blast of the bomb so that it passes over you.
4. If you are caught in the open, do not panic, **DO NOT START RUNNING**, instead :—
 - (a) Throw yourself face downwards on the ground.
 - (b) Rest the weight of your body upon your elbows (which act as shock absorbers).
 - (c) With your elbows on the ground place your hands so that the fingers of both hands interlace across the nape of the neck, your arms cover the ears.
 - (d) **KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.**
 - (e) **DO NOT CLENCH YOUR TEETH.**

The reason for :—

- (a) is to avoid splinters and especially blast.
 - (b) is to avoid being winded by the concussion.
 - (c) is to prevent the blast from damaging the eardrums and jerking the head back, thus possibly injuring the spine.
 - (d) is to prevent unwanted air being forced into the lungs.
 - (e) is to prevent the concussion jerking the teeth together.
5. It would be minutes well spent to practice adopting this attitude suddenly whenever you think of it.
 6. If you follow the above instructions, unless a bomb lands almost on top of you, you stand a very good chance of surviving a bombing raid.
 7. **THIS SHOULD GIVE YOU CONFIDENCE BECAUSE A BOMB CAN FALL WITHIN TWENTY YARDS OF YOUR PROSTRATE FIGURE WITHOUT HURTING YOU.**

**Would you like to join us for a trip on the LEIGHTON BUZZARD
RAILWAY**

on Thursday August 19th 2004?

I need to have a group of 50 or more in order to book this. It would be one of their 'Sunset Special' trips, which would leave Page's Park Station at 7.30p.m. The return fare would be £4.40 per adult and £3.60 per senior citizen. Children aged 2-15 travel for £2.50 and children under 2 are free. The trip from Leighton Buzzard, to Stonehenge Works, out into the country and back again normally takes 70minutes. We could even organise food beforehand in 'Dobbers buffet' to be served at about 6.30p.m. This could be a jacket potato and salad for £2.60 or a 'Shunter's platter' with cheese and / or ham and salad, roll and butter and tea and coffee for £4.00.

PLEASE GIVE SOME INDICATION OF YOUR INTEREST BELOW. AT THIS EARLY STAGE I WOULD NOT CONSIDER YOU TO BE COMMITTED.

Name	Phone no.	No. in party	Food (yes or no)

**Please Phone or send to Sue Lipscomb or Brenda Grace
addresses & telephone numbers under committee.**

2004-2005 SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Subscriptions were due on April 1st 2004

Name –

Address –.....

.....

.....Post Code.....Te.....

Membership Fees: - (please tick)

Individuals 16-60.....£6.00.....

Over 60's.....£5.00.....

I enclose cheque for £.....Cheques payable to PIMS and sent to:-

**Membership Secretary:- Corral McCormack,
32 Maud Janes Close, Ivinghoe, Nr. Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 9ED**