

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society



Newsletter January 2005

A Heartfelt Plea From The Chairman

I have said on many occasions that my main concern is the future of both the Museum and the Watermill.

A small band of dedicated and enthusiastic members have kept both going for many years but these people are getting older and need help, without which the future is looking grim.

Gentlemen: You do not have to be a qualified craftsman to help. Anyone prepared to get his hands dirty will be as welcome as the flowers that bloom in the Spring (tra-la). If you have recently retired, please don't sit at home waiting for a duster to be placed in your hand – pop along to the Museum and let us put an oily rag in it instead!

We operate on Tuesdays and Sundays. The times you can help and type of jobs are entirely up to you.

Ladies: You all know about our open days with their many varied attractions such as the book shop, plant stall, craft exhibitions, model railway, etc. in addition to all the museum displays. However, the most requested activity is the refreshments. The

most frequent question I am asked at the entrance is “Can we get a cup of tea here?”

We desperately need help on these days. The opening hours are 11.00a.m. to 5.00p.m. but even 2 hrs during the day would help enormously to make the future look brighter.

The Watermill, which is one of the only working watermills in Bucks, has different opening times but the needs there are just as great.

Do, please ring Norman Groom (01582 605 464), David Lindsey (01582 600391), Brenda Grace (01296 668 167), Kit Kite (01296 668918) or any other committee member for further information. The Society's Newsletter has a full list of names and addresses.

Kit Kite

Obituary

Jean Davis (1925 - 2004)

We were saddened to hear of the death of Jean Davis just before Christmas. Jean had been a committed member for many years, and had been involved in some of the most

important projects undertaken by the Society.

Her most lasting memorial is the archaeology room, which was the result of many hours spent with Mary Farnell drawing and cataloguing the finds of digs at the Roman Well and in Grim's Ditch. She was also responsible for the text of "In Pitstone Green there is a Farm". Mary and she together collected the photographs from all over the area. Some of them appeared in the book, but about 500 more formed the basis of the Museum's extensive photographic collection. The research for this book was part of a WEA course on the history of Pitstone which was led by Hugh Hanley. Many original documents were collected by the participants, listed by Jean and later catalogued as Museum archives. Subsequently she collaborated with several photographers (including Don Brooks) to write "The Countryman's Year". Copies of this are still available at the Museum.

Everyone that I spoke to in writing this obituary particularly remembered Jean as the hostess of Society summer parties at Little Barley End. Both she and John were generous in opening their house and garden for what seemed always to be fine summer evenings.

Jean was last active as a Museum volunteer at the time when the archaeology room was moved into the looseboxes. However, she continued to attend Society meetings until quite recently, most prominently as a singer with the Aldbury Madrigal Group at Christmas 2002.

We send our deepest sympathies to John and the family.

Catering Open Days 2005

On the 12 February 2005 at 11.00am in the Education Room at the Museum there will be a meeting followed by a buffet lunch to thank the people who have helped with refreshments on Open Days. If anyone would like to join the team this year they will be most welcome on that day. Please phone 01296 668167

Programme 2005

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

Thursday 17th February 2005

The Wendover Arm; its history and future developments

Roger Leishman is a retired civil engineer and Vice Chairman and restoration director of the Wendover Arm Trust. His talk will focus mainly on the history of the Wendover Arm but there will be brief flashes forward so that Roger can outline the future of the waterway.

Thursday 17th March 2005

Boats Without Water

Neil Loudon is the Vice Chairman of the Milton Keynes Museum and will be speaking about an extraordinary industry in North Bucks. Prepare to be amazed!

Thursday 21st April 2005

Anglo Saxon Buckinghamshire

Mike Farley was the County Archaeologist for Buckinghamshire, but has now retired. His talk will encompass the Anglo Saxon times in our County.

Thursday 19th May 2005

Railways through the Chilterns

Ron White is busy in his retirement, running Britain's largest archive of colour photographs of railways both in this country and abroad. They are all housed in his home and there are over a quarter of a million!

Thursday 16th June 2005

Stowe Landscape Gardens and the Restoration Project

Ken James has been a steward at Stowe since the National Trust took over in 1989, and as such he is extremely well informed

about this unique landscape garden and the work in progress there.

Sue Lipscomb, Programme Secretary

Museum Report January 2005

The report for this quarter is very brief. This is not because of any lack of activity at the Museum but because the major effort is concentrated in one project; that is roof repairs.

The tiled roof over the cowshed, print shop, workshop, and model railway showed significant deterioration last year and is in the process of being completely stripped and repaired. We have a contractor (who is also a society member) to carry out the bulk of the work and by the time the newsletter is delivered we hope the job will be completed. To minimise costs and to speed the job along volunteers have assisted the contractor from time to time. The work must be carried out to an accepted standard as this is a listed building. New tiles cost about 75p each and the number requiring replacement is in the thousands, so even without other material and labour costs this job will cause a noticeable fall in our bank balance.

The other roof being repaired is the curved corrugated iron one over the row of rooms in the sheepyard. The old roof is badly rusted. Here we are doing the work entirely with volunteers but the new corrugated sheets which had to be specially rolled to our dimensions cost several thousand pounds. The job is proving to be more time consuming than we anticipated both in time taken to actually remove and replace sheets and also the fact that to do the work we need at least 6 pairs of hands available. We hope to complete the task by Easter (which is very early this year) but we are very much at the mercy of the weather as it is only one day each week that sufficient volunteers are available on site.

The clearing out of the loft has reached a stage that, with one more large item taken

out, there will be enough space to start methodically cleaning up and applying preservative to the timbers. This job is on hold until the roof repairs are complete. An associated task will be the repair of the rainwater gully between the loft and the cartshed roof. This has been leaking for some time and is becoming worse, causing rot in some structural timbers. Norman Groom's foot went through the floorboards where this rot had set in, fortunately he suffered no harm.

Shortly before Easter the whole site will need a massive clean-up operation in preparation for the first open day on the Easter Monday Bank Holiday. Any members who can spare an hour or two to help will be most welcome. There will be a meeting at the Museum on Saturday 12th February 2005 to plan the catering for the open days this year, and anyone who feels he/she can be of even the slightest assistance in this is cordially invited. Start time of this meeting will be 11.00am. During the summer we shall be desperately in need of volunteers who are able, and willing, to wield a paint brush, even just for an hour or so.

Peter Keeley, Deputy Museum Manager

Bess - On The Mill



Bess regrets that she is unable to provide copy for this edition of the newsletter as her interpreter has not been well. We wish David a speedy recovery from his operations and hope that he will be back at the mill soon. Meanwhile milling dates for this year are on the back of the newsletter.

 **Bess**

AGM 18th November 2004

Below is Kit's report to the AGM as acting Chairman. The meeting elected him as Chairman for the next year. There were no nominations for Treasurer. Norman has volunteered to take on the job from April. This seems to be a lot of extra work for him and we can only hope that another volunteer can be found by the next AGM.

Acting Chairman's Report

Firstly, following a long stay in hospital and a nasty operation, "Welcome back" to John Wallis.

David Lindsey is in hospital at the moment and all our good wishes for a speedy and healthy return are sent to him.

I was co-opted on to the Committee as Vice Chairman with the specific task of sorting out some communication problems which were affecting the running of the museum and am pleased to report that these are now completely solved and the museum is back to its friendly and happy workings.

The Nissen hut has been transformed and was ready for visitors by the last open day. This was due to a great deal of hard work by Norman, Peter and the team and I would like to thank them all.

The catering staff held a meeting in February and were able to sort out some of the difficulties they were having. Help in organising and running is still needed. In spite of an appeal for help in the bulletin only one new person was found. Catering is vitally important to the success of our open days and our thanks go to all the ladies involved.

The monthly Society meetings had a mixed response but everyone who came was happy with the subjects and speakers.

It was recently realised that there might be a gap in the Society's insurance policy. Norman, David and I are treating this as a

matter of great urgency and hope that it will be concluded very shortly.

Last but by no means least, I thank ALL volunteers for their help during the past year – in particular, Brenda, who has kept me on the straight and narrow since I joined the Executive Committee.

Kit Kite

A Coach Trip to the Black Country Living Museum.

The Beds & Bucks Stationary Engine Club is organising a coach trip to the Black Country Living Museum near Birmingham. Members of the Pitstone & Ivinghoe Museum Society are invited to join us on this visit. The Black Country Living Museum is an Open-air museum with many places to visit and lots to do. They do have a website and if you are 'on line' their address is :- www.bclm.co.uk. The date will be Sunday May 8th which is the weekend following the Museum Open Day and Engine Club Rally at Pitstone. The departure point will be outside the museum, which is fairly central for everyone. Parking is in the museum where we can lock the gates. We will be having a 48 seater coach so you will have a comfortable ride. The price, including entrance to the museum, will be £17 and we will be leaving Pitstone promptly at 8.30am. Payment must be made in full on booking. If later you are unable to attend you must let us know in good time to try to find a replacement, otherwise we cannot offer a refund.

If it is like the trip the Engine Club organised to Chatham, a couple of years ago, to which Society members were invited, the coach quickly filled so please book early. Send your details and cheque for £17 made out to Beds & Bucks Stationary Engine Club to Sylvia Andrews, the Engines Club Secretary at 31 Townfield Road, Flitwick, Beds. MK45 1JE. Tel 01525 712949.

WEA Ivinghoe Archaeology Course

Jill Evers returns to us in February with a course on Archaeology. Jill was last with us in September 2003 with a course on Rocks and Landscapes, and this time Jill looks at the way archaeologists work. How do they study the past? Jill will have the answers. The course is in the Meeting Room of Pitstone Memorial Hall. There are 5 meetings starting on **Tuesday 15th February**, plus a field trip. Cost £24. Contact M.Connolly 01296 668719
Please note the start date, as some of our publicity contained incorrect information on dates, for which we apologise.

Pitstone Church

Can I recommend a visit to St Mary's, Pitstone. Though in the hands of the Churches Conservation Trust the church is still part of the village of Pitstone. The church and the church yard are both very peaceful places and an escape from the fast moving pace of life. It is open from 2.30.-5.30 p.m. on Sundays from May to September. For those who would welcome an afternoon in that atmosphere the Committee is always looking for new recruits to their rota. For further details contact Joan Bolton King 01296 668806

Old and New!

Those of you who bought digital cameras and photoprint boxes for Christmas might be interested to see my grandfather's adventure into photography somewhere about 1900 I think. How far we have come in 100 years. If anyone can date it more accurately from the make of camera I would be interested.

1 Lancaster Camera. Instantograph	✓	2	2	0
1 Leather Case for ditto	✓		12	6
1 Instantaneous Shutter (with Camera)	✓	"	"	"
1 Camera Stand	✓	"	"	"
1 Bran top for ditto	✓	"	"	"
1 Focussing Cloth	✓	"	1	6
1 Porcelain Developing Dish	✓			4
1 Nylonte ditto	✓			7
1 Double Dark slide (with Camera)	✓	"	"	"
1.10 oz Bottle Hydroquinone developer	✓	"	"	"
1.10 oz ditto No 2	✓	3	1	0
1 Dark Room Bulb Lamp	✓		1	0
1 Measuring Glass	✓		10	
1 Box Dry plates	✓		1	0
1 packet Gelatine Chloride	✓	-	-	-
printing and papers (P.O.P)	✓	-	1	0
1 packet Hypophosphite of Soda	✓	-	-	2
1 Catalogue	✓	-	-	-
				<u>3.4.2</u>

Gillian Arney

Date for your diary

18 August - Cheese and Wine evening and we are hoping to get Stephen Hearn valuing Antiques.

Watermill Opening Times

From 2.30 – 5.30p.m.

- *28th March Easter Monday
- *2nd May Bank Holiday
- *8th May Sunday- National Mills Day
- 22nd May Sunday
- *30th May Spring Bank Holiday Monday
- 12th June Sunday
- 26th June Sunday
- 10th July Sunday
- 24th July Sunday
- 14th August Sunday
- 28th August Sunday
- *29th August Bank Holiday Monday
- 11th September Sunday – National Heritage Day
- *25th September Sunday

* Milling demonstrations from
3-5p.m. Approx.

Adults £1.20, Children (5-15) 40p
Members of PIMS free

Museum Opening Times

From 11.0a.m. - 5.00p.m.

Craft and Family Fun Days-
2nd Sunday in the month-

12th June, 10th July, 14th August,
11th September.

Museum Days- Bank Holiday Mondays

28th March, 2nd May, 30th May,
29th August.

Monday 2nd May – Beds & Bucks Engine
Club Rally.

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

Committee:-

Chairman Kit Kite

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

Treasurer John Wallis Hazel Bank,
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11 Morland Close, Dunstable, Beds.
LU6 3QB Tel. 01582 600391

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Museum Website:-

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

Watermill Website:-

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