



# *Pitstone & Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter*

*July 2007*



## **From the Chairman**

Kit Kite sends his apologies that due to ill health he has not been able to send a report for the newsletter this issue. We all wish him well for a full recovery.

## **Museum Report – July 2007**

Summer is here and we have had half of our open days for this year already. The first two were satisfactory. The third open day was the late May bank holiday and it rained hard all day resulting in takings only around half of those last year. The deficit was partly made up by a best ever result for Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June, but as this is traditionally our quietest open day of the year this still leaves us substantially down on last year's figures so far. We are left hoping for a 'better-than-anticipated' second half of the year in order to fund our quite ambitious expansion plans (see later in this report).

The performance of the new grass mower continues to be up to expectations, but this has been marred by pieces dropping off on two occasions and the sudden total failure of the battery. Maintaining the grass in both orchards as well as on the Museum site is proving to be very time consuming; the machine has an hours totaliser so I can say, at the time of writing [on 22<sup>nd</sup> June], we have cut grass for over 70 hours so far this year – that is equivalent to 2 full working weeks for one person and the Museum can ill afford so much time from a volunteer base which could have been devoted to other work within the Museum.

The restoration of the large Amanco engine from Lacey Green windmill is still ongoing. At the time of writing we are engaged in the fine detail work which precedes the finished installation; again shortage of man-(or woman) power with suitable skills is our problem. The stone mill which came to us with the Amanco engine is being restored by Michael and Alan. It is not intended to restore this to full working order because the millstones are unusable due probably to being subjected simultaneously to frost and damp over many years. The structure of this mill is mostly cast iron and steel and we had to dismantle it at Lacey Green to transport it in pieces to the Museum. It was extremely rusty and most of the bolts holding the frame together broke rather than unscrewed. Not a problem; we just need new bolts when we reassemble. However there were many large adjusting screws remaining in the cast iron framework and it was highly unlikely these could be removed without special treatment. The best treatment available to us was heat, and we piled the frame pieces in the centre of a bonfire of waste timber (always plenty of that here) and lit it when the wind was from a suitable direction so as not to be a nuisance to the villagers. This did the trick; every single screw was retrieved in a reusable condition. On the downside, the heat caused some distortion in the main frame sections. We think this could have been avoided if each frame



piece was separately heated in its own smaller bonfire, but that would need a great deal more wood, and time. However we have learned a valuable lesson.



**Maurice, Peter, Ron and Norman**  
**Removing the Stonemill from Lacey Green windmill** (*photo Brenda*)

The restoration of the hayloft above the Meeting Room is now on hold until the winter. The section of the floor over the workshop has been completely renewed and the resulting mess in the workshop below took a whole day to clear. Some of the old floorboards we removed were so rotten it was surprising there had not been a collapse anywhere considering the weight of artefacts and rubbish piled on top of it for many years.

At the end of April we received planning consent to go ahead with our expansion plans. These involve two separate areas; buildings at the end of the Sheepyard which effectively form an extension to the tractor sheds, along with a rearward extension to the Science & Radio building. We are starting with the Sheepyard buildings and at present the ground has been cleared (unfortunately involving the felling of a rather fine gage tree) and marked out, and we are awaiting a contractor with a digger to excavate for the foundations. Then the rest of the work will be carried out by the volunteers involving concrete laying, brickwork, timberwork, roofing, decorating and fitting out, and we hope to have the building open for the public next Easter. Fingers crossed !



The extension to the Science & Radio building we hope to start next summer; that is if there is enough money left in the kitty after constructing the new Sheepyard buildings.

The cataloguing and entering on to the computer database of our large photograph collection is now well advanced by Sandra. When this project is finished the next job we have lined up for her is a resumption of cataloguing of new artefacts; this has been on hold for a year or two now due to lack of resources. Sandra, with other members of her family, has been presenting the very popular microscope displays in the meeting room on each open day. There have been some very interesting pond life and other minute items on view to visitors both on a large television screen and to view directly in the microscopes.

John Youngs and Tom Cole have been working on Jack Brantom's Harmonium which originally came from Northall Baptist Chapel. It is now back in the meeting room looking very smart with the woodwork now finished. We still do not fully understand the operation of various stops on this and await an expert to advise us on its operation.

**Peter Keeley, Deputy Museum Manager**

### **Paper, paper and more paper!**

As many of you know we achieved the status of a Registered Museum with the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives) a year or two ago. We thought we had 'arrived' but sadly they have now removed the bottom rung of the ladder and we either have to give up or produce vast amounts of paperwork to gain, what is now called, 'Accreditation Status'. The documentation we have to tackle is the same as that for all museums and I gather that the Imperial War Museum at Duxford has just gained this status. How one can compare Duxford to Pitstone I am not sure!

As well as providing a copy of our Constitution we have to have an 'Acquisition and Disposal Policy', a 'Forward Plan', a 'Financial Plan', an 'Office Procedure' document, an 'Archive backlog Procedure' document and of course meet all the requirements of maintaining an approved archive procedure. The worst of all was to create a 'Disaster Plan' amounting to some 30 pages. We were given a format to follow and it was detailed down to the level of requiring contact details of where one could obtain plastic bags and cardboard boxes.

Those volunteers helping, following a disaster had to have a tea break of 15 minutes after every 2 hours. I wonder what would happen if we had a disaster at the museum, would we all meet in the Village Hall and sit down to read this document whilst the museum burnt down? Another exercise in applying for 'Accreditation Status' is to fill in a multi-page online questionnaire needing



hundreds of answers and then ‘upload’ all the documentation to the MLA. I think Peter and myself will be very glad when it is all over, either one way or the other. One other government requirement (or the EU I would imagine) is to produce a ‘*guidance notes for volunteer staff, including, fire & emergency procedures*’ document that must be seen by all volunteers working at the museum even if they only attend for an hour or two each year. This document will be handed to the volunteers.

## **Membership**

We still have about 30% of the membership who still have not paid this year. Subs were due on 1<sup>st</sup> April. For those that have paid and have not received their membership card, you should find this enclosed. If you have not paid, a payment slip with details is enclosed. If you require your membership card straight away please enclose an SAE with your cheque otherwise your card will go out with the next newsletter in October. If we do not receive your subscription by October we will unfortunately have to assume that you do not wish to continue as a member.

## **Workload**

I am finding that the workload in the last year has been increasing to a point where I must cut back. I need for someone to take over the job of Membership Secretary. I still think it is essential for me to carry on with the job as Treasurer as 95% of the turnover is at the museum and I need to keep in touch with the finances.

Bill Barnard has now volunteered to take over the job of Membership Secretary.

**Norman Groom**

## **History**

**Pitstone:-** Pincenestorne, Pincelestorne (xi cent.); Pichenestorre, Puchelesthorne, Pichelesburne, Pechelestorne, Pichesthorn, Pythelesthorn (xii–xiii cent.); Pikelesthorn, Pynchenestorn (xiii–xviii cent.); Pightlesthorn (xiv–xix cent.); Pittleston, Pitchthorn, Pitstone (xvii– xviii cent.).



**Pitstone Post Office Row**  
*after removal of the Post Office.*

The parish of Pitstone consists of 1,644 acres, of which 949 acres are arable land, 229 acres permanent grass, and 218 acres woods and plantations. The soil is variable, a considerable portion of it is chalky and unfit



for tillage; the subsoil is chalk. Pitstone Hill, 714 ft. above the ordnance datum, in the southeast, is the highest point in the parish. The ground sinks gradually towards the north to about 330 ft. Pitstone village, which is very small, lies in about the centre of the parish. North and south of it pass the Upper and Lower Icknield Way.

Pitstone Green, with its cottages, smithy and inn, is to the north of the village, and beyond it again is Yardley Farm. This latter marks the site of Erlai, land which once formed a sub-manor in this parish, and gave its name to an ancient hundred, later to become part of Cottesloe Hundred. Erlai House, a large moated mansion, formerly stood here, but was already in a ruined condition in the 18th century. The remains of another old house, called Pitstone Place, are now part of the Church Farm, while a third, pulled down about 1830, but before that time forming the parsonage-house, called Morrants, probably marked the site of the manor held here by the college of Ashridge. At the Church Farm is a homestead moat, inclosing a nearly semicircular island.

The hamlet of Frithsden or Friesden, now in Great Berkhamstead parish, Hertfordshire, was included in this parish in 1831. Its manorial history, however, is that of Little Gaddesden, and it belonged, with the latter manor, to the college of Ashridge. A confirmation of lands to that foundation in 1291 refers to 'a valley called Frithesdene' as a boundary, (and a 'wood in Berkhamstead called le Frith' is mentioned about the same time. Nettleden was a chapelry in this parish until 1895, at which date it was formed into a parish and transferred to Hertfordshire, under which county it has been described.

Ashridge, the college of Bonhommes, which came to the Earls of Bridgewater in the 17th century, and is now the seat of Earl Brownlow, is in the parish of Little Gaddesden, but was included in Pitstone parish from earliest times until the latter part of the 19th century. Its manorial history is given under the former parish.

The Parish Council possesses an interesting series of documents relating to town lands, the earliest dating from 1423.

Among place-names occur those of Wessebrok, Bachmundeswelle, Stiwardesponde, Fulk Fidekyn's Land (xiv cent.); Conyngarthfeld, Turnerfeld, Losefeld, Totehilfeld, Parkefeld (xvi cent.).

*From: 'Parishes: Pitstone', A History of the County of Buckingham: Volume 3 (1925), pp. 406-12.*

*URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=42589&strquery=Pitstone>.*

*Date accessed: 23 July 2007.*



## Ivinghoe:-

Evinghehou (xi cent.); Iuingeho, Hythingho, Yvyngho (xii–xiii cent.); Ivanhoe (xvii cent.).



### **Ivinghoe Town Hall**

*Town Hall before renovation.  
Shows the blacksmith's shed to  
the left of the picture*

The parish of Ivinghoe contains 4,787 acres, of which 2,010 are arable land, 1,570 permanent grass, and 425 woods and plantations. The soil is chalky, subsoil clay and chalk. The land, which is comparatively low in the north, averaging about

300 ft. above the ordnance datum, rises to the east and south, where lie the Ivinghoe hills. The Icknield Way flanks the hills on the north side, and divides near the town into the two branches known as the Upper and the Lower Icknield Way. Beacon Hill (762 ft.) and Gallows Hill (615 ft.) are the chief summits in the north of the range. According to an account of the parish, c. 1712–20, a beacon once stood on the former hill, and the kettle and other materials belonging to it were at that date still in the church.

Further south the land is well wooded, and rises even higher, one point, near Crawley Wood, being 811 ft. above the ordnance datum. In the extreme south of the parish the ground again becomes more open, and sinks some 50 ft. to 100 ft. The Grand Junction Canal passes through the low land in the west of the parish, and, nearer the centre, Whistle Brook, rising near the town, flows in a northerly direction. Probably the low-lying parts were formerly of a more marshy nature than at present. In the 16th-century records of the parish such names as Nott Lake furlong, Little Water furrow, Bosbrook, Holy Well Brook occur, and in the 18th century Waddon Lake and the 'lake next Slapton field.'

The small town of Ivinghoe occupies a fairly central position in the parish. It contains several 16th and 17th-century houses, all of which have been altered and added to. The old manor-house, a timberframed building of late 16th or early 17th-century date, has now been completely altered, and retains but few of its original features. The King's Head Hotel is a house of 15th-century origin which was apparently almost rebuilt in the 17th century, and has since been much altered and



modernized. In a bedroom on the upper floor is an original stone fireplace with a four-centred head.

The old town hall dates probably from the 16th century, and originally had an open ground story and chimney stacks with diagonal shafts. It has now been almost entirely modernized, the ground story having been inclosed, but retains the old timbers in the projecting upper story and in the ceiling of the ground story.

Besides the church there is a Baptist chapel built in 1804, and a Wesleyan chapel built in 1866.

In the north-west, and lying partly in other parishes, is the hamlet of Horton. Horton Hall, Horton House and Horton Farm stand in the neighbourhood, where are also the remains of a moat. Ivinghoe Aston, somewhat larger, but very scattered, lies in the north-east. At both these hamlets are Wesleyan chapels. To the west of Ivinghoe town is the hamlet of Seabrook, divided into two parts known as Great and Little Seabrook, both lying near the canal. Two other hamlets, St. Margaret and Ringshall, were formerly in Ivinghoe, but were transferred to Hertfordshire, being now in the parishes of Nettleden and Little Gaddesden respectively. The name of Barley End, a former hamlet, still survives in the neighbourhood, as does that of the family of Duncombe, who lived there for many generations. The cellar alone remains of their old house, which has been replaced, on the same site, by a farm-house. Most of these hamlets represent ancient tithings of Ivinghoe, and the 16th-century Court Rolls show that the manorial courts were attended by tithingmen from Ivinghoe Major, Ivinghoe Minor, Nettleden, Hencombe, Whytwey, Horton, Seabrook, Aston Castroffe, Aston Bishop and Wardhurst.

The parish, agricultural to a large extent, produces good wheat crops, also barley, oats, peas and beans. As early as 1317 the Bishop of Winchester, who held Ivinghoe, received protection for the corn which was being sent from his manor here to London.) Ivinghoe was apparently occupied by troops in the Civil War in 1645.

It is interesting to note that the name of this parish provided Sir Walter Scott with the title for one of the Waverley novels. Scott, who chose it for its 'ancient English sound,' says that it was called to mind by the rhyme recording the forfeiture of this and other manors by an ancestor of John Hampden for striking the Black Prince at tennis:—

'Tring Wing and Ivinghoe  
For striking of a blow  
Hampden did forgo  
And glad he could escape so.'



Both rhyme and legend are, however, entirely unsupported by facts. The names of the same three parishes occur in other doggerel also, and with as little reason. An Inclosure Act for the lands of Horton hamlet, in the parishes of Slapton, Ivinghoe, Edlesborough and Pitstone was passed in 1810, while the lands of Ivinghoe parish were inclosed by an Act of 1821.

*From: 'Parishes: Ivinghoe', A History of the County of Buckingham: Volume 3 (1925), pp. 379-87.  
URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=42584&strquery=Pitstone>.  
Date accessed: 23 July 2007.*

## **Letter to the Editor**

With reference to the article in the last newsletter:

Original transcript of proceedings from the Old Bailey.

JOHN BARNES, GEORGE SEABROOK, theft : animal theft, 15th January, 1823.

Ref: t18230115-3

Aylesbury Bucks  
25<sup>th</sup> May 2007

*Dear Sandra,*

*I read with interest about George Seabrook in the report from your recent newsletter. The Seabrooks were very prolific in this corner of Bucks and Herts and my own grandmother Sarah Ann Seabrook (1849-1922) had eight surviving siblings in Victorian times.*

*Les Lang of Vicarage Road who you probably know, gave me the following ancestry for George.*

*A baptism at Marsworth, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1806 (ties in with his said age at trial) "George son of Kidgell Seabrook and Ann".*

*Hope this is of interest,  
Alan Dell*

I did look on the International Genealogical Index on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) for George Seabrook but did not find him. Since receiving Alan's letter I have found Kidgell Seabrook and Ann and 4 baptisms of their children but no George. His baptism on 2nd February 1806 is not recorded there.

**Sandra Barnard**



## **Programme 2007**

All meetings are held in the Education Room in the Pitstone Green Museum at 8.00 pm.

For members who have not attended meetings for some time, the entrance to this room can be found by walking along the lane past the reception buildings and down towards the back of the Museum where there is car parking through the gate, that is open on meeting nights.. The entrance is on your left .

### **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August '07**

#### **Cheese, Wine and Antiques**

Once again we will be welcoming Stephen Hearn to our ever popular Cheese, Wine and Antiques evening. The museum will be open from **6.45p.m.** to allow members and their friends to walk around the exhibits, and then the refreshments will be served at **7.15p.m.** Please do not bring more than two items for Stephen's comments and valuations. Tickets cost £4.00 for members and £6.00 for non members. **YOU WILL NEED A TICKET FOR THIS EVENT – SEE SLIP WITHIN THIS NEWSLETTER (WE HAVE NOW SOLD 48 TICKETS) PLEASE PHONE BRENDA FOR AVAILABILITY.**

### **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September '07**

#### **Work and Recreation at Mentmore**

Karen Thomas has been the archivist of the Mentmore Society for a number of years. She has a large collection of photographs and memorabilia connected with Mentmore Towers and will be talking about the work and recreation of those associated with the building from the 1950's onwards.

### **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October '07**

#### **The Luton Hoo Walled Garden Project**

John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute established the Luton Hoo Walled Garden, in the late 1760s. A noted botanist and friend to George III, his garden at Luton Hoo was second only to the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. As the estate evolved under new owners and management, the garden changed to match the fashions in horticulture of the 19th and 20th centuries, only to fall into decline from the 1980s onwards. The garden is now the focus of a fascinating restoration project, which will revive the garden and repair its structures for the enjoyment of future generations. Oonagh Kennedy, originally the curator of Luton Hoo and now a volunteer of the walled garden project will be giving an illustrated talk this evening.



## **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November '07 ... AGM**

### **Sue Lipscomb, Programme Secretary**

NB.

If you would like to be put on Sue's email reminder list, so that you receive an email about a week before each meeting, please send her an email -

**Sue.Lipscomb@btopenworld.com**

We often receive phone calls from the public with a question about a subject or a local family from the past and we try to answer the question and sometimes pass on to someone else who would have better knowledge. The question was about Osier beds in relation to Aylesbury. Below is the result of my research.

### **Brenda Grace**

### **Osier (Willow) Beds at Pitstone Museum**

At the rear of the Museum, just outside of the gate near the steam model railway track, we have an Osier Bed. These beds were planted by Jeff Hawkins, with cuttings from North Marston, in memory of Charlie Dixon, who demonstrated basket making at the Museum on open days.

Osiers were cut from beds at North Marston, Bucks. A railway line to Aylesbury ran nearby and the baskets made from the Osier cuttings were used on the railways for carrying various items.

Charlie worked at the Aylesbury Basket factory. Margaret Smith who demonstrates basket making on Open Days at the Museum, learnt much of her basket making skills from Charlie and still uses the Osiers at the Museum.

### **Front Cover Picture**

Rory in the Blacksmith's Shop on an Open Day at the Museum



## **Open Days 2007**

Sunday  
Bank Holiday Monday  
Sunday  
Opening times from  
11.0 a.m. to 5.0. p.m.  
Adults £3 Children £1.50.  
Members of PIMS free

## **Committee:-**

### **Chairman**

Kit Kite 01296 668918

### **Museum Manager, Treasurer and**

### **Membership Secretary**

Norman Groom 01582 605464

### **Deputy Museum Manager**

Peter Keeley 01582 792701

### **Secretary**

Brenda Grace 01296 668167

## **Committee**

John Wallis 01296 661997

### **Programme Secretary**

Sue Lipscomb 01296 630578

### **Publicity Secretary**

Anne Ball 01442 822672

### **Trading Secretary**

Jeannette Wallis 01296 661997

## **Other Officers:-**

### **Archivist** (of computer records)

Sandra Barnard

### **Craft Co-ordinator**

Kathleen Haran 01582 792895

### **Newsletter**

Sandra Barnard

**N.B. Last date for articles for next  
copy:-30th September 2007**

## **School Group Visits**

For information on school visits, please  
contact Sue Jones on 01296 660436

**Museum Website:-** <http://website.lineone.net/~pitstonemus>

**Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society  
Pitstone Green Farm, Vicarage Road, Pitstone  
Leighton Buzzard LU7 9EY**



**Registered Charity No 273931**