

## **Museum Report – January 2009**

Basically the Science and Radio Room extension is finished. By that I mean it is a complete building inside and out and is fitted with basic display tables and has electricity. It is painted internally all except for the floor which is being left until later. Norman wants to do the rest himself; this includes additional shelving, cabinets, and fittings, and of course selection and arrangement of all the new artefacts which will be on display there on Easter Monday (won't they, Norman?), for you all to come and see. Actually the building isn't quite finished; there is still the rainwater gutter and downpipe to be connected to a drain not very far away, but drain digging at this time of year is not very pleasant (is it ever ?).

We continue to have meetings with various people from The National Trust (NT). Recently their representatives have been on site to carry out a quite detailed survey of both buildings and land, and I have represented the Museum at a meeting between NT and Pitstone Parish Council which was called to discuss progress towards providing the allotment site for local gardeners in the field to the north of the Museum. The parties are hopeful that preparation of the site can commence before the end of January with a view to the new allotment holders being able to grow something there this year. The major hold-up at the time of writing appears to be "the gate". Most of you would not believe the amount of bureaucracy and rules and regulations involved with gaining access to your own property across a stretch of grass bordering a simple wide straight stretch of highway subject to a 30 mph limit. I have had experience of this some years ago in another environment.

One side effect of these negotiations could well be that we shall gain even more land. I think it has already been mentioned in the newsletter that the Museum has been promised the osier bed and surrounding strip of land being included within our lease. The Parish Council find that a further adjacent strip of land is of no use to them for their allotment plans and are willing to add this land to the osier bed and border which will make a significant addition to our land area. The downside to this is that it will take a significant effort to tame this new area as it is heavily infested with brambles, nettles, elders and briars. A start has been made in anticipation of gaining this additional area and I am willing to do much of the work with a little help from one or two of the volunteers, but I do have concerns that we might be taking on more than we can cope with in the future. Grounds maintenance is becoming one of our major tasks at the Museum.

We have discovered another Well at the Museum....in the Owen Barn. Pigs were once kept on the concrete slabs which now form the floor of the barn, and the slope towards the middle of the barn was to aid drainage and mucking-out. In other words the concrete was laid for pigs to be kept on, and we believe this happened

around the late 1930's, although we are still trying to find a definite date. One of these concrete slabs had a smaller slab within it about one yard square. I have often looked at this smaller slab and thought that there must be a reason for it; there must have been something under there at one time, if not now. Then one Sunday in December I just happened to have in my car boot a very substantial crowbar belonging to someone else which I had been using and realised that this was just what was needed to lift this heavy slab. I lifted the slab but could not see under it without a torch, so I sought out Rob Barber who usually has one with him, and together we lifted and looked; and lo and behold there was the Well. There is a pipe in it which appears to feed water to the old hand pump built onto the wall just



by the Potters Shed. We know this wall was part of a big farm extension circa 1913 so provisionally we assume the well was built either then, or before then. We are going to make a feature of this Well, hopefully before Easter. Its depth below the concrete floor is about 4 metres and it contains about 3 metres of crystal clear water. We have trawled a strong magnet over the bottom but have not found anything magnetic there.

Owen Barn Well

It was mentioned in the last newsletter that we might be gaining a large new working model to display at the Museum this year. A decision has been made where to put it, and the group who own it have started work prior to its installation. It will occupy one of the cart sheds to the rear of the Museum. Perhaps this will serve to attract more visitors to this area. We have a number of interesting exhibits located inside the cart sheds, and the large shed is an exhibit in its own right, but very few visitors venture down there on open days. It is almost as if they don't think they are allowed down there. I have often witnessed visitors read the information board about the grain silos and then walk a few more paces, and when they see the yard down to the fuel pumps they simply about turn without exploring. Maybe it is the row of parked staff vehicles which is always there putting them off. I have tried to persuade the owners to park in the orchard where the majority of the volunteers park, but to no avail I'm afraid.

The determined effort, forced upon us by our gaining Accredited Status, to complete our backlog of cataloguing by a set date has failed at the first stage, but not by very much. Our first target was to complete cataloguing of all but six of our 48 locations by the end of 2008, and to ensure that all catalogued items in those locations are marked with their identification numbers. We shall not achieve this

because there are still a significant number of artefacts to be marked or re-marked, but cataloguing is virtually complete. It is disappointing after the big effort put into this by Sandra, Mike and Jean Morris, and me, but we tried and we nearly did it. We shall hopefully finish this during January/February and then start on the remaining six locations in the spring.

Dave is busy enhancing the model railway layout at "Much Hammering"; Michael and Alan are well on the way with their mill restoration in the large cart shed; and John (Y), Tom and Robin are progressing well with their cart restoration. The refreshment area is undergoing stage one of a two-stage renovation, and this consists of fitting an enlarged false ceiling, and installing a more substantial end-wall at the tea urn end. It would have been nice to have done stage two as well at the same time, but we thought we could be in danger of overstretching our resources if we tackled it this year. Stage two is essentially remodelling the rear wall section including the food preparation and sink areas, and rewiring, but this will have to wait until next year.

And to finish I think we are now getting serious about our proposed wildlife pond, maybe this year; you'll have to wait and see. That's it for now. I hope to see you <u>ALL</u> on Easter Monday when you can see all the enhancements for yourselves.

Peter Keeley, Secretary

#### 2009 Open Season

It doesn't seem long since we closed down for the 2008 open season now this year's open days are fast approaching. We have just had our annual catering meeting to thank those that helped last year and to prepare for this year. The meeting was well attended, the biggest committee meeting I have ever chaired at the museum and it was very successful. We were also treated to a superb buffet laid on by Anne Ball and Shirley Marling. Once again our major problem is helpers in the catering area on open days. If we can recruit just a few more members that are willing to help, for just half a day now and again, it would ease the work load. If you can offer your services in a small way, either helping to prepare the food, serving the food or making cakes to sell, please ring Cathy Terry on 01296 613998 or send an email to:- catterry@hotmail.com. Cathy is in charge of organising the bookings for each day.

Another request for help from society members relates to advertising. Last year we produced coloured A4 posters that could be put up in Libraries or indeed any notice board we could find. In addition this year we have abandoned our DL size leaflets and gone for a triple folded, A4 double sided colour leaflet, used by many other organisations. In order to get these and a reasonable price (although still costly) and

if everything goes to plan, we may have almost twice as many printed as our previous year DL size leaflets. Can you help to distribute these leaflets and posters? Anne Ball, who handles our advertising, would appreciate help in distributing these leaflets. Postage is now expensive, if you can get these in your local libraries, tourist information centres, clubs and society notice boards, distributed with any other societies newsletters, it would be a great help to the museum. These should be available at the museum from mid February onwards. Anne's phone number is on the committee list at the back of the newsletter.

The other problem is related to roadside advertising. At the moment the only areas covered is my route in from Dunstable and small signs that Rob Barber and Peter Keeley put out. We have a vast area to the North, South and West of the museum that is not covered. If you live within a reasonable distance of a well used route and can find a suitable location we can provide a sign that you could put out prior to an open day. If you would like to discuss the possibility please give me a ring on 01582 605464 or call into the museum one day. I am on site Tuesday, Thursday or Sunday.

The final request is for help within the museum. We have an exceptional workforce that can do almost anything relating to ground work, building, repairs, construction and restoration of the larger items at the museum. What we do not have are members that would be willing to take an interest in the artefacts on display within the museum. Mike and Jean Morris have done wonders over the years and are still doing so but with over 2600 artefacts they really need extra help. At the moment they are busy helping Sandra and Peter with identifying and numbering and checking the location of each item. We do need others that can help with cleaning, perhaps re-organising, creating new displays and coming up with new ideas.

Hopefully the extension to the science room will be completed and in operation by Easter. We have three stereo zoom microscopes that have been donated to the museum and have in past years been very popular. However they really need someone to supervise their use. You do not need to know anything about microscopes, five minute tuition is adequate but we do need someone with an interest in some branch of Natural History that could put them to good use and perhaps increase their own interest and knowledge of the subject in doing so. If you can help either in either way with advertising or with the new science room display, please give me a ring on 01582 605464.

We have lost contact with our craft organiser; however we did maintain our craft stalls during the 2008 open season by allowing those that run the stalls, simply to turn up without the bother of booking. We do need more craft stalls. If you know of

someone that would come along, the only condition is that the crafts items sold must be hand made rather than just the sale of commercial items. If you know someone that would demonstrate any craft such as wood turning they would be more than welcome. We do make a charge of £6.00 for a craft stall but for those only demonstrating then there is of course no charge.

## Norman Groom Museum Manager

### **Membership**

The 2009/2010 membership subscription will be due on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. Subscriptions are £7, with a £1 reduction per person if you accept one newsletter and one membership card for a couple living at the same address, i.e £12 per couple.

Please pay after 1<sup>st</sup> April by cheque. This is now our preferred method of payment. Cheques should be made out to Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society and returned with the slip that you will receive in April to the museum address on the final page. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope, if you want your membership card quickly, otherwise they will go out with the July newsletter.

**Bill Barnard Membership Secretary** 

#### Ivinghoe 1823-1824

Although a small market town and parish, it was just thirty-three miles from London and consisted of just two streets. The market is held each Saturday although its popularity does not attract the local customers as it once did and could very well be discontinued. Like villages and towns it was self sufficient, shops, post office, blacksmith, they were all there. Everyone knew their neighbour, and many families lived in the same street and married sons and daughters near to the aging parents.

Most of the men, women and boys would be working on the local farms. During the winter when people would need hot food, the wives would put the boiling stew pot into a hay box to slowly simmer away in the large iron saucepan. Girls most often were either straw plaiting, lace making or by the time they were ten years old, put into service as a scullery maid in one of the big houses. If the family could spare the loss of this pittance of a wage of a child, then the youngster was able to attend the local school.

Winter would bring muddy roads; chimneys would smoke from the wood the cottagers had been given permission to gather from the estate. A few candles lit the room and if a family could afford the luxury, a candle in a small lantern outside of the street door.

The sounds of the countryside in those far off days were very different from what we know. The only mode of transport was a ride to a man's destination given by a carter, or more often or not it was 'Shanks Pony'. Cattle bellowed in the fields, the squawking of chickens and sheep added to the orchestra of country sounds. Then there were

people, whatever the season, there was work to do. This was back breaking by today's standards, cows to milk by hand, sheep to shear also by hand. Winter would see men laying hedges and cleaning out ditches, sitting near their work eating large hunks of bread and cheese washed down with cold tea, or more likely beer.

Families were large in those days, the very young playing in the dirt roads outside their homes. Bath time was once a week, parents and children all using the same water in a tub by the cottage fire, topping up the grimy water from the kettle on the range.

Those days have now gone, along with all the people who inhabited 'Ivinghoe'. They left us something, 'History' for us all to see, if we care to look.

## Traders and Shopkeepers Etc. for Ivinghoe 1823-1824

The London Post arrives at ten a.m. Sunday, Wednesday and Friday and returned at three p.m. the same day.

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John Dodd Post Master
William Bates Boot- Shoemaker
John Blyth Grocer
William Collier Straw Plait Dealer
William Cook Straw Plait Dealer
James CooleyBlacksmith
Short and CrossGrocers
Charles Cross Butcher
Mary Dealey Draper
John Groom Wheelwright
James HealeyPlumber and
Glazier
William HealeyPlumber and
Glazier

James James ...... Grocer

Benjamin JeffsBoot and
Shoemaker
James Jeffs Straw Plait Dealer
George MeacherBrewer
Joseph ParsonsTailor
Reverend Richard JohnVicar
John RogersButcher
Edward ShortButcher
John SimmondsCarpenter
Jonas Smith Straw Plait Dealer
Thomas TozerLandlord
of Kings Head Inn
Rebecca WellsDraper
George WilliamsonBaker



**Old Picture of Ivinghoe Town Hall** 

Carrier to London....William Short's Wagon, every Thursday to 'The Swan' Holborn Bridge. Coach..... To London every day at half past one, from the 'Kings

half past one, from the 'Kings Head Inn', to the 'Bull Inn' Holborn.

Fairs..... These were held at Ivinghoe on 6<sup>th</sup> May and the 17<sup>th</sup> October each year.

The population count of the inhabitants of the Village in 1821 was 551.

#### From the Directory of Ivinghoe and Buckinghamshire, circa 1831-1832

Coaches..... To Cambridge, a coach from Oxford passes through Wing every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at eleven. It then goes through Leighton Buzzard, Woburn, Bedford and St. Neots.

To Oxford, a coach passes through Wing, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoon about half past three and goes through Aylesbury and Thame.

Carriers...To London, William Short from his house Ivinghoe every Thursday.

To Aylesbury, Francis Copcutt, from Ivinghoe, and Walters, from Wing every Saturday

#### **Ena Ashurst**

#### Shanks Pony.... One's legs, used as a means of transport.

The term 'shanks pony' is sometimes capitalized as 'Shank's Pony' as some reports claim it to have derived from an individual called Shanks, or from the Shanks and Company Ltd. (formed in 1853 and now absorbed into Armitage Shanks), who previously manufactured lawn-mowing machines. One such horse-drawn mower had no seat and the driver had to walk behind it. Examples of these machines still exist and this would be a plausible theory of the meaning, although there is no real evidence.

The Old Lawnmowers Club at Aspley Guise, Milton Keynes explains the term Shanks Pony on their web site:-

Before the invention of the motorised mower, whether steam or petrol powered, the only way to cut a large area of grass was to use a pony or horse drawn machine.

These mowers were often little more than scaled up versions of the hand mowers made by the same companies. The pony pulled at the front and the operator normally walked behind, although a few designs provided a seat above the rear roller. In theory it should be possible for one person to control the mower and the pony but most contemporary photographs show a second person, often a boy, possibly the gardener's apprentice, walking alongside the pony to guide it. The pony often wore leather boots or slippers to prevent hoof marks on the lawn.

Most of the well-known manufacturers produced pony or horse drawn mowers but probably the best known was Alexander Shanks and Co of Arbroath, Scotland. This company had produced the first horse drawn mowers in the mid-19th century and they were immediately popular, especially on the growing number of golf courses and other sports grounds that were being built at the time. Some people believe that this is the origin of the term "Shanks's Pony", meaning to walk, but no definitive source of the phrase is known. It certainly makes sense if one takes the phrase to mean "having a pony but still having to walk".

Extract from the web site....www.oldlawnmowerclub.co.uk

#### Sandra Barnard

## **Maurice Wingrove and Bob Garrett**

The Lead Sheet Association Cup was presented to Bob Garrett and Maurice Wingrove for lead work demonstrations at The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton. The presentation took place at a luncheon at The Wax Chandlers Hall Gresham Street London presented by the Grand Master of the Worshipful Company of Plumbers, David Alexander.

Maurice and Bob work as volunteers at the museum and also demonstrate their leadworking skills on our open days.



Bob Garrett and Maurice Wingrove receive their Cup from the Lead Sheet Association

## Programme 2008 - 2009

All meetings are held in the Meeting Room in the Pitstone Green Museum at 8.00pm. *ALL VISITORS VERY WELCOME* 

## Thursday 19th February '09

## Victorian Herbal Medicines

After 30 years in industry, our speaker, David Hammond qualified as a Medical Herbalist in September 2008 and now practises Western Herbal Medicine in Pitstone, Aylesbury, Chesham and London. During Victorian times, most medicines were either herbal in origin, or used minerals, many of which were poisonous. Many of the herbal medicines went on to become the basis of many of today's pharmaceutical drugs. This talk will look at herbal remedies that would have been familiar to every Victorian

housewife, how they were made and what they were used for. There will be a chance to sample some herbal teas still used today in modern herbal medicine.

## Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March '09

## **The Early History of Leighton Buzzard**

Viv Willis resides in Leighton Buzzard and has studied its history for many years from very early times up to the present day town. He runs a history group within the local U3A and would give us any of his range of 17 talks. I hope you enjoy the one I chose! It should cover the early beginnings of the settlement up to Norman and Saxon times.

## Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April '09

## Ashlyns: My life in a Foundling Hospital

In the 1730's, Captain Thomas Coram returned from many years at sea and was appalled by the plight and neglect of children left to die on the streets. In 1739 he received a Royal Charter from King George II to establish a "hospital for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children". This became known as the Foundling Hospital and over a period of two hundred years, up to the Second World War, the Foundling Hospital took in over 27,000 children. The governors of the Foundling Hospital decided in 1926 that it should be moved to Berkhamsted. Our speaker, Lydia Carmichael lived there from 1938 until 1948. Two years later it became Ashlyns School.

## Thursday 21st May '09

## The First Landing of an aircraft at Halton

Francis Hanford is the curator of the Trenchard Museum at RAF Halton which deals with the history of RAF Halton. This museum is open every Tuesday from 10a.m. until 4p.m. and could also be opened by arrangement and might make a very good visit for society members later in the year.

## Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June '09

## **Hobbies Evening at Pitstone**

This is a great occasion for putting yourself and your hobby on display! All are welcome however quirky and unusual your collection. If you have brought a display to a previous hobbies evening, please don't let that stop you from coming again and if you truly have nothing to bring, then do come and learn more about other people's hobbies. If you have friends who would like to show us their hobby or simply enjoy the evening, please bring them along. I hope the weather will be kind to us so that we can bring a picnic to enjoy. There will be a barbecue alight there if you wish to cook something to add to your meal. Please note we will not be providing any food or drink.

## Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July '09

## **Cheese, Wine and Antiques**

Our very popular evening at the museum with Stephen Hearn has been repeated again this year due to popular demand. 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. YOU WILL NEED A TICKET FOR THIS EVENT –details later.

## Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August '09

To be arranged - details later

## Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September '09

## The Archaeology of the A41; Aston Clinton Bypass

Robert Masefield was the archaeological consultant who was involved in the management of the Aston Clinton Bypass once it was realised that there was a potential for interesting finds. He will talk about three main sites; the woodlands roundabout, the Lower Icknield Road near Buckland and the area at the top of Tring Hill. The finds were related to many different periods of history from Prehistoric times right up to the Middle Ages.

## Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October '09

## **Experiences as an Auctioneer**

This will be Stephen Hearn's second visit of the year, this time to talk about his life as an auctioneer. Knowing Stephen I'm sure that there will be much merriment and laughter. He has promised to include some reminiscences of his childhood in Wigginton.

## Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November '09

AGM details later

## Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December '09

#### Christmas Social

This year, as always, we will have mince pies and sausage rolls ready for you and some liquid refreshment too. All we ask is that you come to this social event, bringing with you if you wish, some anecdote, reading, song or anything that might interest or amuse the assembled group. If you would prefer not to 'perform' please don't let that put you off and come simply to chat to others.

## Sue Lipscomb, Programme Secretary

**Note:** - 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** 

## A Date for Your Diary

# Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at The Grange School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury. 10.00a.m to 4.00p.m.

The museum will once again have a table at the "Bucks Family History Society" Open Day. We have represented the museum there for the past two years giving Pitstone Green Museum a tremendous amount of publicity. This is occasion is always well supported and last years attendance was over 800. This is a must for those interested in family history.

#### Sandra and Bill Barnard

## Front Cover Picture.

Reg Jellis takes his dog Basil for a tractor ride on an Open Day at the Museum!

## Open Days 2009

Easter Mon. 13<sup>th</sup> April

May Day BH Mon. 4<sup>th</sup> May (engines and

models day)

Spring BH Mon. 25<sup>th</sup> May

Sun. 14<sup>th</sup> June Sun. 12<sup>th</sup> July

Sun. 9<sup>th</sup> August

Summer BH Mon. 31<sup>st</sup> August

Sun 13<sup>th</sup> September

Opening times from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Admission charges adults £4 children £2

## **Committee:-**

#### Chairman

**David Goseltine** 

Email... daigos@tiscali.co.uk

Vice Chairman

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**Treasurer** 

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Norman Groom 01582 605464

Deputy Museum Manager

Rob Barber 01296 680494

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Secretary

Peter Keeley

## Site Manager

John Childs 01582 833501

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### **Programme Secretary**

Sue Lipscomb 01296 630578

## **Publicity Secretary**

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#### **Craft Co-ordinator**

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#### **Holding Trustees**

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Reg Jellis

## Please Note: - Last date for articles for next copy 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Museum Website:- http://website.lineone.net/~pitstonemus
Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society
Pitstone Green Farm, Vicarage Road, Pitstone

