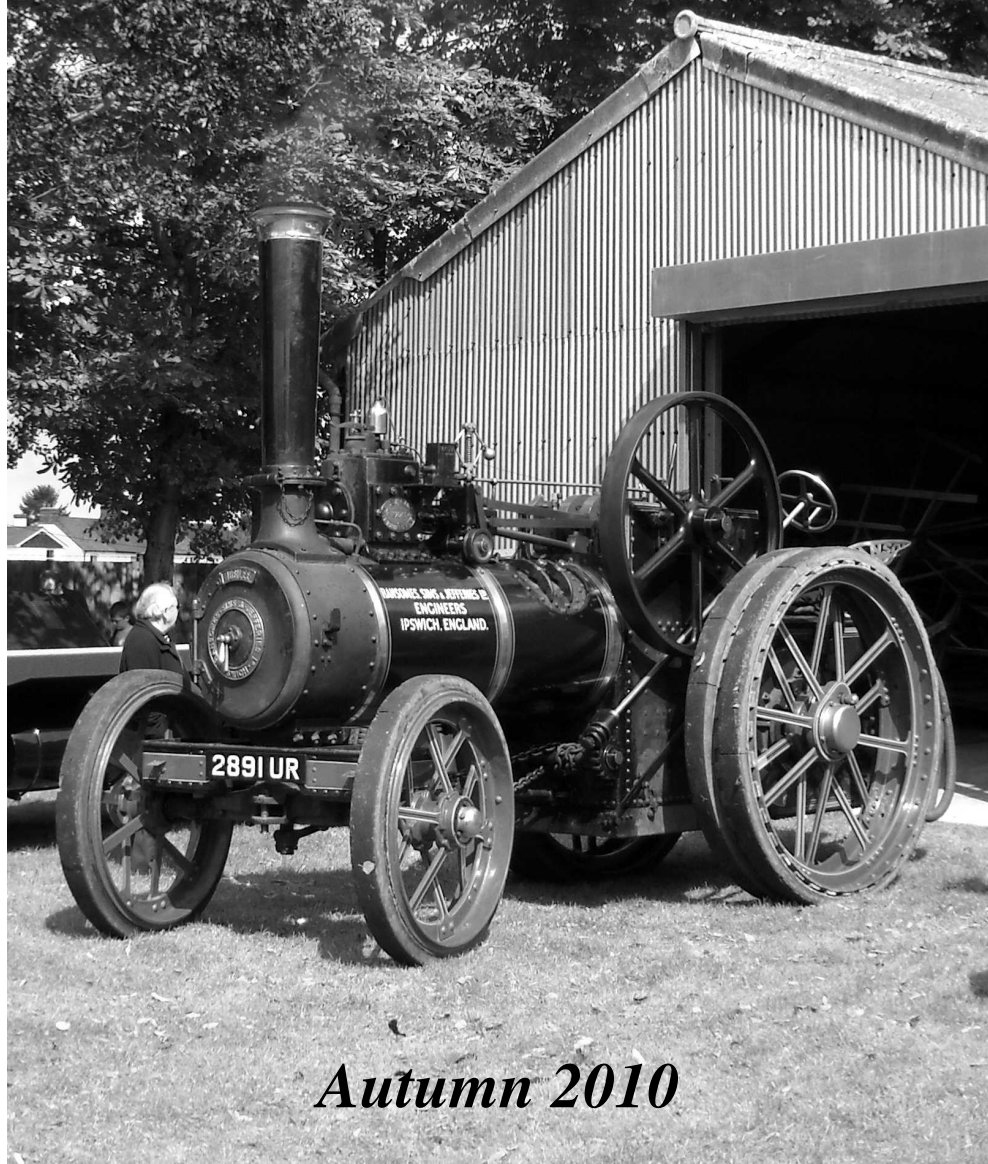


*Pitstone and Ivinghoe
Museum Society Newsletter*



Autumn 2010

Museum Report –October 2010

Well, that's another year over. At least that's another year of Museum open days over once again and we can reflect on how we did, and how we might improve next year. The same patterns appear as in previous years since we have been analysing our visitor numbers and takings. Bank Holiday Mondays are good; Sundays are relatively poor. What we need is more Bank Holidays, and in the summer months of the year, one in June and one in July. Until fairly recent times England had just six of these holidays each year, until the government gave us two more, New Years Day, and May Day. We are still one of the worst off countries in Europe for public holidays; Malta, the smallest country in the EU, has 12 public holidays, and they don't celebrate either Boxing Day or Easter Monday.

August Bank Holiday Monday was another record breaker; the best ever for that day, and second only to Easter Monday 2009 which, so far, has been our best ever day. I don't think we would want many more people through the gates as we would start to become crowded and the catering staff might become overstretched. In comparison Sunday 8th August was poor, even though the weather was not at all bad, and Sunday 12th September was not very good either despite lovely weather. All-in-all our takings are about 10% down on those of last year with visitor numbers 12% down, which suggests that visitors are spending more per head. We must be doing something right. Considering the state of the national economy I don't think we are too dissatisfied. Interestingly the missing visitors are all adults as the number of visiting children this year was slightly more than last year.

Earlier this year we started to use our own orchard for staff and exhibitor parking so that only the visiting public used the Hawkins' orchard. We have noticed occasionally members of the public using this car park instead of the one clearly marked "CAR PARK". Of course, once visitors have parked in the staff car park there is nothing to stop them circumventing reception and gaining free entry. We have no direct evidence of this having occurred yet, but it certainly will sooner or later, so the staff car park gates must be kept closed at all times between 11:00 am when the Museum opens and 5:00 pm when it closes. Staff or exhibitors who are not staying in the Museum all day on open days should either be prepared to close the gates behind them after they leave, or should use the public car park. If the gates are left open next year we may have to consider locking them between eleven and five.

Visits from outside groups have again been disappointing this year. We have had just two visits from U3A groups and a party from Aylesbury College, along with two birthday parties and Joe Marling's concert. As for schools, we had just the one visit from the local school early in the season. There is a big scope for improvement here; what we lack is a volunteer both able and willing to work on this.

Following the theft of ice creams and canned drinks left over from the late May bank holiday Monday we were raided again in August when just canned and carton drinks were taken. These had been placed in the fridge, cooling for the following open day. All remaining drinks, etc, except for just one can were removed to a secure fridge. We had been installing and testing a new alarm device and this was connected into the main security system, and that night at 1:30 am the alarm sounded. Next day we found the one can had been stolen. Of course the thief escaped before anyone could investigate so now we have security lights installed in the catering area and are increasing the scope of our surveillance cameras.

The main plans for the winter are the upgrading of reception, and the provision of undercover storage for some of our old farming machinery which is slowly rusting away outdoors. Both of these projects are underway now. Those who have visited the Museum on the last two open days will, no doubt, have seen that roughly half of our outdoor stored implements have been 'de-rusted' followed by a coat of (yellow) primer paint. This is Nigel's project and he is now well into applying the finishing coats of paint to several of these items. Unfortunately we had nowhere under cover to store these yellow painted machines so we had to put them in the grain barn, thereby blocking the way for visitors entering the barn to see the displays inside. Also underway is another small extension to the Science & Radio Room, but this has been in progress for several months throughout the open season, and is scheduled to be finished before Easter.

Various other relatively minor enhancements and restorations are also in progress and will hopefully be available to be seen at next year's open days for you all to visit and inspect. There are just too many to list and there are too many individuals at work to name them all.

Please don't forget the AGM is on Thursday 18th November, and it will be followed by a showing of some of Frank Banfield's old films. Your committee is at present so desperately short of members that if just one of us is off with long term sickness we can no longer function under the terms of our Constitution

Peter Keeley, Secretary

Articles for the Newsletters

The following was written by me Sandra as we had no contributors apart from the usual reports. If you have an interesting article that may be enjoyed by the members. We would be pleased to hear from you. Please email me at the address on the last page. This is the preferred method. If email is not available please write to me at the Museum Address.

Sandra Barnard Editor

Brickmaking and Brickyards

In the Iron Age we lived in roundhouses. These were built in Western Europe before the Roman occupation using walls made either of stone or of wooden posts joined by wattle-and-daub panels and a conical thatched roof. Later until the mid 17th Century most houses were made of timber.

After the fire of London in 1666 there was a move away from timber framed houses towards non flammable products like brick. Bricks were already popular in Europe and their style influenced British house design.

In 1784, a brick tax was introduced in Great Britain. This was during the reign of King George III, to help pay for the wars in the American Colonies. Bricks were initially taxed at 4s per thousand. To mitigate the effect of the tax, manufacturers began to increase the size of their bricks, up to a maximum of 11 inches × 5 inches × 3 1/2 inches (280 mm × 125 mm × 80 mm). In response, the government introduced a maximum volume for a brick, at 150 cubic inches (2,500 cm³). The level of taxation was increased in 1794, 1797, and 1805, peaking at 5s 10d per thousand bricks.

One of the far reaching effects of the brick tax was that some minor brick producers went out of business, having to sell their stock in order to meet tax arrears. It also had an effect on architecture, with many areas returning to the use of timber and weatherboarding in house construction.

The tax was abolished in 1850, as it was considered to be a brake on industrial development. Bricks then became the most popular external choice for building.

The colours of the bricks were dependent on the local clay where they were made. Once railways were used to distribute bricks all over the country they became mass produced and more uniformed in colour and style.

Prior To 1850 bricks were hand-made in wooden moulds. In the 17th and early 18th centuries bricks tended to be long and thin with irregularities in the shape, surfaces and edges giving a relatively rough texture. During the 18th century bricks became shorter and deeper, more regular and smoother. After 1850 machine made bricks of uniform regular shape and finish started to replace hand-made bricks

Whether handmade or mechanically produced, the basic manufacturing process has remained the same for centuries. You dig the clay, mix and roll it, then dry it before it's stored. On the day of production, water is added and the moist mud is banged into a wooden mould. Once turned on its head, the mould is prized from the clay and the bricks are dried to remove remaining water. Now ready for firing, they are

stacked in the kiln and blasted at temperatures ranging from 900-1,200°C, depending on the type of clay. Checked for mistakes, packaged and placed in the stocking yard, the bricks are finally lorried away. In the past, clay was often transported from the quarry to the brickworks by narrow gauge railway or aerial ropeway.

Brick making at the beginning of the 20th century



Life in brickworks, especially during the 19th Century, was one of extreme hardship and fraught with potential danger. For the clayhole men there was always the possibility of rock falls, injury from faulty explosives or crushing from derailed clay tubs. In the machine houses the brick presses, grinding pans and belt driven machines were an ever present danger. Even working at the kilns presented its own dangers. Men were killed by falls of stacked bricks which had become unstable after expansion in the heat and some workers even fainted in the heat from the kilns and burnt themselves badly. Even casual visitors to a works could be killed.

Bricks were made from clay or shale. Usually Brickworks were located on clay bedrock, the most common material from which bricks are made, often with a quarry for clay on site.

Most brickworks have some or all of the following:-

1. A kiln, for firing, or 'burning' the bricks.
2. Drying yard or shed, for drying bricks before firing.
3. A building or buildings for manufacturing the bricks.
4. A quarry for clay.
5. A pugmill or clay preparation plant

Today in a typical modern brickworks, clay is taken from the quarry, and then carried by conveyor belt or lorry to the main factory, (although it may be stockpiled outside before entering the machinery). When the clay enters the preparation plant (Clay Prep) it is crushed, and mixed with water and other additives which may include breeze (very fine anthracite which aids firing). This process, which is also known as pugmilling, improves the consistency, firing qualities, texture, and colour of the brick.

From here, the processed clay can be extruded into a continuous strip and cut with wires, or put into moulds or presses (also referred to as forming) to form the clay into its final shape. After the forming or cutting, the bricks must be dried, either in the open air, in drying sheds, or in special drying kilns.

When the bricks have been dried, they must then be fired or 'burnt' in a kiln, to give them their final hardness and appearance.

There were many brickyards in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. Locally there was a brickyard east of **Cheddington** Church between the railway and the canal. Directories of 1883, 1887-1891, show the **Ivinghoe and Horton** Brick and Tile Co. listing owners Foxen (should be Foxons), Jasper & Foreman. The directory of 1895-1920 lists Foxon, T. (Thomas), brickmaker. They were a small yard making yellow coloured bricks. Some of the houses built with these bricks (yellow) can still be seen in the surrounding villages. It was said locally that straw was also used in their composition. There are no remains and the site is now occupied by a bungalow.

The Foxon name can be seen as brickmakers back to 1851 in the census. 1851 census shows James Foxon b. 1821 in Bedford aged 30. Esther his wife was 26, son Thomas 7 and daughters Mary Ann 3 and Sarah 9 months. James gives his occupation as Brickmaker and his residence was Marston Moretaine Bedfordshire.

In 1861 James was now 39 and making bricks in **Slapton**. He and his wife now have 2 more daughters and 2 more sons. Son Thomas is now 17 and a carter.

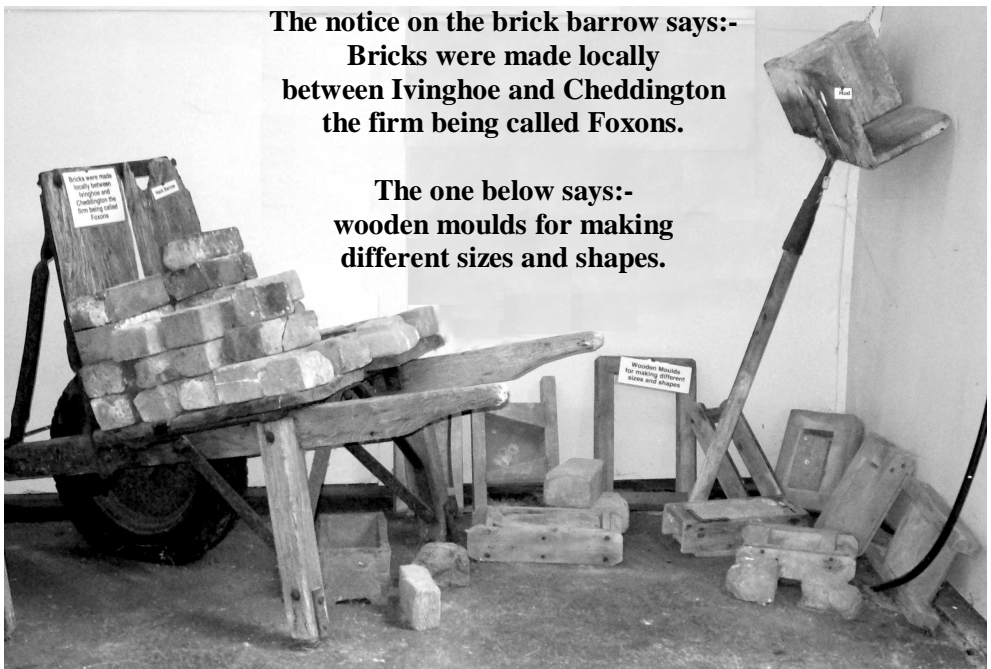
In 1871 they were still in Slapton working as brickmakers. Thomas Foxon now 26 is joined by brothers Andrew as a brickmakers boy and George an errand boy. The older girls are all now straw plaiters.

The Slapton brickyard was between the village and the Grand Union Canal. Directories show 1847 Howard, James, brickmaker and 1877 Foxon, James, brickmaker. James remained a brickmaker in Slapton in 1881 together with son Andrew. His death was registered in the March Quarter of 1883 at Leighton Buzzard aged 62.

1881 shows Thomas was now married to Alice and living in Cheddington working as a general labourer. They have 2 sons David and William. In 1883 he must have started at Cheddington as a brickmaker and is listed in the directories of 1883, 1887-1891.

On the census of 1891 Thomas Foxon is in Station Road Cheddington and listed as aged 47 Brickyard Manager with wife Alice 45 b. Slapton. By 1901 Still in Cheddington at Station Road he is described as aged 56 a brick manufacturer-employer.

This display of handmade bricks can be seen at the Museum in the Nisson Hut



There was a brickfield and yard at **Mentmore** adjacent to the railway near Whaddon Farm. Shown to be there in 1879/1885. Listed in Directories 1928-1931 of Leighton Buzzard Brick Co., Ltd. as brickmakers, Ledburn. This was a brickyard for the Mentmore Estate. **Edlesborough** had brick making in 1864.

One of the most notable brickworks was The London Brick Company. The London Brick Company owes its origins to John Cathles Hill, a developer-architect who built houses in both London and Peterborough. In 1889, Hill bought the small T.W.Hardy & Sons brickyard at Fletton near Peterborough and it was this business that was incorporated as the London Brick Company in 1900. The generic name “Fletton” is given to bricks made from lower Oxford Clay giving them a low fuel cost due to the carbonaceous content of the clay.

Sandra Barnard

Some of the other Brickfields & Brickyards in the Buckinghamshire area:-

Amersham & Chesham Area:-

Amersham at Amersham Common; Copperkins Lane.

Bellingdon north of Chesham Still in operation in 1980. Several works under this company. Also at **Chartridge**.

Botley , east of Chesham, at Shepherds Farm.

Coleshill, South of Amersham at Coldharbour Farm.

Hyde Heath South West of Chesham.

Ley Hill Common (Amersham) Also at **Latimer**.

Lye Green by Brockenhurst Farm.

The Lee at Swan Bottom.

Aylesbury area:-

Aylesbury had a brickfield and yard at Cambridge Street near the fire Station.

Bierton had one at Brick Kiln Lane, north of the Village.

Drayton Beauchamp had one at Oaken Grove.

Grendon Underwood South of Village at Kingswood.

Haddenham, low.

Hartwell, on Aylesbury Road .

Hazlemere, Biblelands Society Amersham Road.

Quainton near Knapps Hook Farm Doddershall; behind the windmill in the centre of the village; adjacent to the railway of Quainton Road Station.

Wingrave & Rowsham Rowsham Barn.

Whitchurch & Hardwick Bushmead Road.

Beaconsfield Area:-

Beaconsfield east of Holtspur Farm.

Chalfont St. Giles Botrells Lane.

Chalfont St. Peter Durrants Heath, South of Jordans.

Hedgerley Pennlands Farm; Hedgerley Dean.

Wooburn White Pit Lane; Wooburn Green; Niplands; Hawks Hill adjacent to Chequers Inn.

Bicester Area

Brill, near Thame Oxfordshire. A large scale brickyard using the Fletton process.

Calvert & Steeple Claydon, aquired by London Brick Company in 1936.

Long Crendon, south of village on the Thame Road.

Woodham, north of Akeman Street near former Akeman Street Station.

Wotton Underwood & Dorton, south east of Tittershall Wood; West of Hill Farm Ashendon.

Buckingham area

Buckinham, Lenborough Road; Prebend End; north of Laurel House.

Great Horwood between village and Winslow.

Hillesden, Hillesdenwood Farm.

Maids Moreton near Buckinham

Middle Clayton, north west of Claydon House .

Padbury, at Norbury to the west of the village.

Stowe, at Boycott Manor

Thornborough & Tingewick, east of Buckingham.

Turweston, north west of Buckingham.

Winslow, South East Buckingham.

High Wycombe Area

Bolter End & Lane End , Moor Common; Handleton Common.

Booker, at junction of Cressex Road and Gibson Road.

Cadmore End Common.

Fingest & Lane End

High Wycombe, Pauls Row; Oxford Road; Victoria Street .

Great and Little Kimble, south of Marsh.

Lacy Green, east of village.

Penn & Tylers Green, Penn Street.

Prestwood & Great Missenden, west of Prestwood at Aldridge Grove, Honor End Lane.

Walters Ash , Bradenham, Hughenden & Naphill...

West Wycombe & Wheeler End, Hearnton Wood West Wycombe.

Leighton Buzzard Area

Stewkley, Wing Road.; Dunton Road behind new bungalow “Kilnholm”; Dunton Road adjacent to house “Old Brick Farm”.

Littleworth & Wing, north of Wing on Soulbury Road site of housing development.

Wendover & Berkhamsted area

Buckland Common, Bucklandwood Farm; between Buckland Common and Cholesbury

Cholesbury, Shire Lane; Oak Lane.

There were also many brickyards in the **Milton Keynes & Newport Pagnell** area of Buckinghamshire viz:-

Bletchley; Chicheley;Fenny Stratford & Simpson; Great & Little Woolston;

Great Linford; Little Horwood; Newport Pagnell; Newton Longville;
North Crawley; Olney; Stoke Goldington; Stony Stratford, Calverton & Wolverton; Water
Eaton; Woburn Sands.

Slough , Maidenhead & Marlow area viz:-

Burnham; Great Marlow; Iver; Marlow & Medmenham.

Directories :-

1830....Pigot & Co.'s National Commercial Directory of Buckinghamshire

1842....Pigot & Co.'s Royal, National & Commercial Directory & Topography of
Buckinghamshire.

1847)

1863-1864)

1883-1924).... Kelly's Directory of Buckinghamshire 1847-1939

1928-1939)

1853.... Musson & Craven's Commercial Directory of Buckingham

1865... Edward Cassey & Co's History, Topography & directory of Buckinghamshire

1876... J.g. Harrod & Co.'s Royal County Directory of Buckinghamshire

1926)

1949)... Town & County Directories Ltd.: Buckinghamshire and South Survey District
Trades Directory

1940....Aubrey & Co.'s Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Directory

Ref:-*"Gazetteer of Buckinghamshire Brickyards 1800-1980 by Buckinghamshire County
Museum"*.

There is much more information contained in the document mentioned above, but too
much for this article. A copy of the Gazetteer donated by David Goseltine, is now held
at the Museum in the Office.

Sandra Barnard

Membership

There are still about 9 members who have not renewed their membership. Some may
have forgotten. As a reminder there will be a final slip for them with this newsletter.
Please return stating whether you wish (or do not wish) to renew.

Bill Barnard Membership Secretary

Obituaries

George Turner of Tring 1936-2010

We were very sorry to learn of the death on the 13th September of George who was
the Curator of the new Tring Local History Museum, and after all his involvement,
not able to live to see its opening.

Horace Fiddler of Cheddington Aged 89

Horace was brought to the Museum in August to see again the many Model Farm
Carts he had made and donated to the Museum, and while he was there he also had a

look round the other exhibits, so we were saddened to learn of his sudden death on the 18th September.

Programme 2010

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

Thursday 18th November '10

AGM and Films from the Archives

After the business of the Annual General Meeting, Frank Banfield will be returning to our meeting, by popular request. He last entertained us in January 2008. He has a vast collection of 16mm cine films, and will choose a selection, mainly of local interest, dating between 1937 and the 1970s.

Thursday 16th December '10

Basically Bats

Don't miss this fascinating illustrated talk on bats by Patty Briggs who has been working for 25 years on conserving these much misunderstood animals. This talk will not only explain the essential role that bats play worldwide in the maintenance of the ecosystem of our planet but will bring you nearer to home to discover where bats live, how to find them and dispel your preconceptions.

Thursday 20th January '11

Tracking down Grandfather George

John T Smith will tell the story of his work in tracing his grandfather's story. The family knew he had left them for Canada but didn't know where he had gone nor when. They presumed it was some time after the last child was born in 1904. He was a boot maker, so why leave Rushden in Northants and go farming? Gradually John managed to unravel the story and he will show us the sources he used, the documents he found and outline the use he made of the internet.

Sue Lipscomb

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

Front Cover Picture. By Bill Barnard

Alan Frost's Traction Engine outside a barn on the Museum's August 2010 Bank Holiday open day. This open day was our best one of 2010 with warm sunny weather we had 377 visitors and 96 children.

Open Days 2011

Easter Monday, 25th April
Spring Bank Holiday, 2nd May
Late Spring Bank Holiday, 30th May
Sunday, 12th June
Sunday, 10th July
Sunday, 14th August
Summer Bank Holiday, 29th August
Sunday, 11th September
Opening times from
11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
Admission charges adults £4 children £2
Members free.

Committee:-

Chairman

David Goseltine
Email... daigos@tiscali.co.uk

Vice Chairman

Norman Groom 01582 605464

Secretary

Peter Keeley 01582 792701

Treasurer

John Youngs 01582 833678

Museum Manager

Norman Groom 01582 605464

Minutes Secretary

Sue Lipscomb

Deputy Museum Manager

Dennis Trebble

07738786210

Programme Secretary

Sue Lipscomb 01296 630578

Publicity Secretary

Anne Ball 01442 822672

Other Officers:-

Computer records of Archives and

Photographs Sandra Barnard

Craft Co-ordinator

Brenda Grace 01296 668167

Membership Secretary

Bill Barnard

Email... barnardw@bre.co.uk

All subs. to Museum address below

Newsletter Editor

Sandra Barnard

Email... alexrose42@btinternet.com

Site Manager

John Childs 01582 833501

Trading Secretary

Jeannette Wallis 01296 661997

Holding Trustees

Don Levy

Bob Morgan

John Wallis

Reg Jellis

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

Hits to October 2010...26402

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society

Pitstone Green Museum, Vicarage Road, Pitstone

Leighton Buzzard LU7 9EY

