

# *Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter*



*Spring 2012*

## **Museum Report – April 2012**

The main problem this quarter has been repair of the roof of the Big Barn. Readers will recall that a section of tiles slipped during gales just before the last Newsletter was published. Close examination of the roof, along with some historical research, has led to our purchase of a new scaffold tower to enable access to the roof inside the barn.



The problem basically is that nails which secure battens to rafters have rusted away in some places. The tiles just rest on the battens with a securing peg to prevent them from sliding down. The January gale caused a whole section where the nails were badly rusted to slip downwards leaving a gaping hole exposed to the weather. Fortunately there were no artefacts stored underneath the hole, and fortunately again the slipped section of tiles just "concertina-ed" on themselves rather than fall to the ground so most were saved for re-use. John Childs and Roy Cutler found it a delicate task removing the slipped section lest they all started to cascade downwards onto themselves and the ground below. However they were successfully removed and a new set of battens fitted because the old ones had split in many places and were unfit for re-use. Some of the battens towards the roof apex where the tiles had not slipped, but which were precarious, were secured from inside using the new aluminium scaffold tower.

### ***Roy Cutler and John Childs repair the barn roof. Picture by Norman Groom***



Some historical research in the archives has clarified the situation which prevailed in the early 1990's. Apparently, prior to the Society taking its lease of the farm buildings from Jeff Hawkins, a professional survey was carried out in 1989 of all the listed buildings - the Big Barn, the Cowshed wing, the Meeting Room wing, and the Cart Sheds at the rear. One recommendation from this survey was that all the roofs should have the tiles removed in order that the battens supporting them could be re-nailed to the rafters as there was evidence of slippage in many places where (Georgian?) nails had rusted away. To

have carried out remedial action in respect of all recommendations in this report would have cost a huge sum of money. A further survey was carried out in 1992 involving, amongst others, the late Chris Wallis who had considerable experience in

renovating timber buildings, and a revised schedule of repairs was published. In particular this revised schedule only required batten re-nailing in certain sections of the Big Barn roof, and the Society commissioned Chris Wallis to do this work, and obtained a grant to help with the costs. The section which slipped in January this year was one of those not covered by the Chris Wallis repair.

Since then most of you will recall that the Society has had the whole of the Cowshed wing roof re-battened and re-tiled. That leaves the remaining sections of the Big Barn, along with the Meeting Room and Cart Sheds wing, needing roof examination.

The site where the Green Shed was has now been fully cleared and awaits some excavation work prior to laying a new concrete floor. Then a replacement building of substantially the same size will be erected. This will be of mainly wood construction with feather edge weatherboarding and a corrugated iron roof, very similar to the nearby Models Room. It is intended that the new building, when finished, will be open to visitors on Museum open days, and it is very likely that it will demonstrate typical woodworking techniques of yesteryear, although we are still considering our options on this.

The McCormick reaper-binder is almost back together again, and if only we had a horse, and if only we had access to a field of wheat, we could try it out this summer. It has been quite a difficult task to strip it down as many of the fixings were badly rusted, but Rob Barber and Nigel Thompson persevered and the result will be on show at Easter in the Grain Barn. In places some quite exquisite paintwork and lining was revealed as having survived the years of use followed by even more years of storage, but the machine has just been treated with various rust prevention remedies, no attempt being made to restore the paint finish.

Rather than pay almost £300 for a new fuel tank for our Stiga mower Norman has attempted a repair of the crack in the old tank. The repaired tank has been refitted and the machine has been used just once to cut the whole of the grass. This needed careful work because there had been no cutting done since August Bank Holiday last year and in some places the grass was both long and tough. Now it is ready for a second cut, slightly shorter this time, and we have not seen any leaking diesel from the repaired tank so far.

We are still in need of people with skills, or indeed with no skills at all but willing to learn. Extra help is always welcome on open days in all areas. Helping with dusting and re-arranging and labelling artefact displays is an activity where we are very short of volunteers. Operating and demonstrating the Gauge '1' model railway layouts on open days always could use extra helpers, and of course relief operators on the reception and catering tills would be very welcome. If you think you would like to be more involved but don't know quite where you could help why not come and talk to

us. The main working days when volunteers are always present are Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays.

The Arts Council, which is the successor to the old MLA, have written to us to say we must complete an Accreditation Return if we want to remain an accredited museum. The trouble is this involves virtually the same amount of work, hours and hours of it, as was needed for the original application in 2008. This is at present underway against a very short timescale. It also means we need to appoint a Museum Mentor (a museum professional who works in the region) to whom we can turn for advice and guidance. A possible candidate has just been identified and we shall no doubt be meeting him in the near future. More on this will follow in a future report.

The volunteers have been cleaning and tidying the Museum site ready for the first open day on Easter Monday. The area somehow seemed even more untidy than usual this year after a winter's effort by the volunteers of repairing and restoring things. If you call in to see us do not be surprised if you have a broom or a mop thrust into your hands. Both are quite easy to use, just requiring a gentle reciprocating motion of the arms. Training is available.

STOP PRESS; the Easter Monday open day, the first of the year, was cold, windy, and it rained most of the day. Naturally, attendance by the visiting public was down on expectations. We had just under half the visitors we had hoped for, so our takings were commensurately low. There were no tractor-and-trailer rides (much too wet and muddy) but both the shop and the refreshment counter showed a higher per head takings than could have been expected. All-in-all, considering the weather, we are happy. The Beds & Bucks Engine Club attended in force for their annual rally. They had virtually all of our collection of engines out and running during the day; something that has not happened for a long time.

**Peter Keeley, Secretary**

### **Reginald (Reg) Gordon Jellis 1937 – 2012**

Reg was born on the 1st February 1937 at Old Farm, Pitstone to Charles and Hilda Jellis. He was the eldest of five children, Winn, Ian, Sylvia and Terence. He married Irene Wesley in 1962 and had two children, Chas and Nicola. There are four grandchildren Kirsty, Joseph, Tanya and Natasha.

Reg started livestock hauling in 1959, hauling cattle, sheep and pigs from local farms and markets to his father's slaughter house at Old Farm in Pitstone. He then ventured out and started hauling for the local Tunnel Cement Works. The 50Kg bags of cement were loaded by hand at the works, onto a flat bed truck and then unloaded again by hand at the delivery destination, usually building sites. 10 tons or 200 bags were the normal load and on arriving at the site all the local labour would disappear until the unloading was complete.



*Picture by Bill Barnard*



By the early eighties the business had built up and was running various trucks from 7.5 tons to 38 tons. In the 90's the truck size increased to 40 tons, and then 44 tons as of today. Ultimately the truck numbers increased to 15 employing lots of local drivers who also became his friends.

Due to ill health the business was cut back but Reg never moved out of the area as local history was very important

to him and his knowledge of this was remarkable.

He started collecting and restoring Stationary Engines a number of years ago and then moved on to tractors, one of which was a Massey Harris, which had been used by Irene's grandfather Bert, at Town Farm, Cheddington. Two other tractors in his collection were the 'David Brown' used for rides at the museum and the 'Ford Dexta' used for cutting grass at Pitstone churchyard. He also restored his grandfather's Bedford PC van ordered in 1939 but delayed by the war until delivery in 1951. His other restoration project was the 1939 Bedford cattle truck restored over 40 years ago.

*Picture by Dennis Trebble*



Pitstone Museum was also special to Reg, he was a great friend of Jeff Hawkins and supported the museum in any way he could. With his family members and friends, he has provided tractor rides to Pitstone Windmill on every open day, I think, since the very first museum open day and without missing one. Even on a wet day when rides were impossible he would sit in his tractor shed talking to visitors, volunteers and friends about his

various interests. He funded all this, including insurance and fuel out of his own pocket, all the takings going to the museum. His advice and help in maintaining the museum tractors has been enormous and if we ever had a mechanical problem Reg was always there to help out in any way he could

My last memories of Reg were that often on a Sunday lunch time at the museum; the first thing that would happen was Basil, his dog, would rush in followed by Reg.

Within a few minutes he would be telling us stories of local interest, local people and places, and amusing stories of events that happened to him during his working life.

He will be greatly missed in many ways, especially his vast knowledge of events and people in the locality. Reg was one of our Holding Trustees.

### **Norman Groom**

The Remembrance Service was held at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin Ivinghoe on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March at noon attended by hundreds of his friends, relatives and Basil his dog and constant companion.

### **Sandra Barnard Editor**

### ***Continued from the January Newsletter.***

### **Alfred James Fuller 17 February 1914 – 6 December 2011**

As mentioned in our January Newsletter Alfred was born into a family of homesteaders on the edge of the prairie in Alberta, Canada.

He was the second oldest in a family of 3 sons and 1 daughter. His Father died when he was just 13 which placed a heavy responsibility on the children. These were the depression years, and the Farm could not support them all and work was hard to come by. In the 1930's he was rarely out of work. He worked on farms and ranches, riveted oil tanks, became an irrigation engineer, a grain buyer and qualified as a grain elevator manager. He sold furniture on the streets of Chicago for rather longer.

In 1940, back in Alberta, he rented his own farm for a year but, despite being able to work with horses again, something he always loved, he started to think about the Air Force. In July 1941 he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force working as an Air Frame Mechanic. By 1943 he decided to become a pilot but due to a minor problem with his eyes, he became a Flight Engineer instead. It was probably early 1944 when he arrived in Britain and was posted to Yorkshire.

A life changing event occurred in December 1944 when he was visiting some people in Wigginton who took him to a dance in the Victoria Hall in Tring where he met Mary Prentice.

By the end of the war he was a Flight Sergeant and was flying in Lancasters on troop transport, bomb disposal in the Irish Sea, and photographic missions over German cities.

Mary and Alfred were married at the Akeman Street Chapel in November 1946. They lived initially in Whiteleaf and Kimble. Soon after, however they moved to Tring where he joined Mary's Father's Scrap Iron and Metal Business in Longfield Road. The business allowed him to indulge in his interest in old machinery.

Mary and Alfred had three children who each had three children.  
Forever a Canadian, he never took up British citizenship. A true Gentleman.  
Excerpts taken from the Eulogy by Robert Fuller, Alfred's son.



The photo shown was taken in 1932 of the Chiltern Bus Company Tring which was run by Mary's Father Frank. We hold in our archives a heavy coat used by the Drivers.  
**Brenda Grace**

### **Two forthcoming PIMS visits**

#### **Visit to the Buckinghamshire Museum Collection in Store**

The Museum Resource Centre at Halton is used by both the Aylesbury and Milton Keynes Museums to store their spare artefacts. We have booked a two hour visit for a group of our members on **Wednesday June 6<sup>th</sup>** between 10.00 and 12.00. We have asked to see resources from the Social History and Costume section and also from the Ceramics and Art section and hope some might be linked to the Pitstone and Ivinghoe area. The cost would be £10.00 per person and sadly because of limitations of space the minimum number is 10 and the maximum number would be 16. If you feel this is something you would like to attend please email me **Sue.Lipscomb@btopenworld.com** (01296 630578). I will give more details of the visit to the first 16 people to contact me, asking them to confirm the booking by sending me the money as cash and will put the others on a reserve list.

#### **Visit to Halton House and the Trenchard Museum**

The Trenchard Museum is the aircraft museum at RAF Halton and some of you may remember back in May 2009, Francis Handford, the curator, came to give us a talk. We have arranged this visit for **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July** between 10.30 and 13.00. It will start with a tour of Halton House and finish with a visit to the Museum. A £1.00 donation to the Halton House Heritage fund is requested from each person and the

Museum has a box for voluntary donations. The minimum number of participants is 10 and the maximum 40. Once again I shall take bookings on a strict 'first come first served' basis. See above for details. I will not need money in advance for this visit.

### **Programme 2012**

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

### **Thursday 17th May '12**

#### **Society Quiz**

Our quizmaster for the evening will be Dennis Trebble, our Museum archivist. We will be encouraged to form teams of any size in order to compete in eight rounds, one of which will be linked to the Museum and the locality.

### **Thursday 21st June '12**

#### **A Hole in the Ground!**

Rodney Sims has been working with BBOWT for the past 30 years and has great concern for our wildlife and the environment. This evening's illustrated talk will tell us about the development of College Lake from its quarrying beginnings and its importance today.

### **Thursday 19th July '12**

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

Our very popular evening at the museum with Stephen Hearn is appearing once again in our programme. 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. The evening will cost **£7.00** for members and **£9.00** for non-members and will include a ploughman's platter and complimentary glass of wine. Please do not bring more than two items for Stephen's comments and valuations. We hope you will park in the orchard. You will need a ticket for this event and you will find a booking form in this newsletter.

### **Thursday 16th August '12**

#### **Hobbies Evening**

This is a great occasion for putting yourself and your hobby on display! All are welcome however quirky and unusual your collection (nothing has been censored yet!). 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.

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

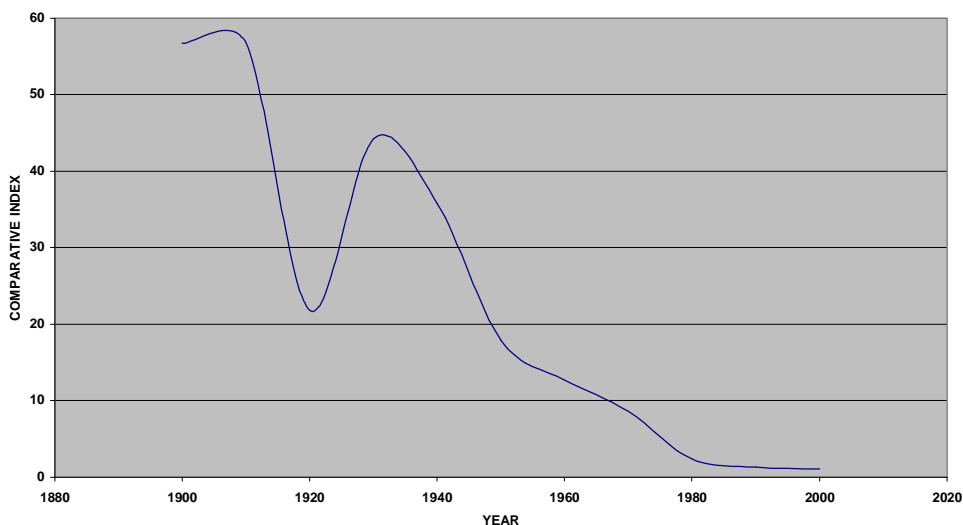
*Note:* - If you would like to be put on Sue's email reminder list, so that you receive an email about a week before each meeting, please send her an email –

**[Sue.Lipscomb@btopenworld.com](mailto:Sue.Lipscomb@btopenworld.com)**

## **Bits and Bobs**

In this news letter's article, I haven't settled on a coherent theme but have taken a wander amongst the bills and invoices that occur from time to time. In these days of almost instantaneous access to information via the World Wide Web it is easy to lose sight of the fact that for almost 70% of the Twentieth Century we relied upon paper and pen as our prime source of data transfer. Looking through the various pieces of paper that have survived in the archives I was struck by the extent to which the value of money has changed. The following graph shows how it changed over the course of the Twentieth Century. To read it you need to look at the index value for any given year e.g. 57 for 1900 and that is the number of pounds you would need today to equate to one pound in 1900. We can see, again, that for 1960 the index is 13, suggesting that £1 then would be the equivalent of £13 today. There is a significant blip in the graph caused by the post WW1 depression when monetary values declined. Consider this: in March 1925 the Grand Junction Canal Company was so powerful that it policed its own towpaths and issued exclusive licenses for towpath use other than for those directly associated with the canal. One of the most sought after permissions was to use a bicycle on the towpath, but even that came with the caveat that it was "at his own risk" (notice the incipient gender bias). Such licenses had to be renewed yearly.

THE COMPARATIVE VALUE OF MONEY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IN THE UK



How did people have access to specialist goods such as subject-specific books in 1927? Mail order was the answer and suppliers such as Percival Marshall and Co of Farringdon Street, London were able to supply "Boot and Shoe Making" for 3/9 and "Boot Making and Mending" for 1/9 (in modern money roughly £6.90 and £3.30

respectively). An invoice of February 1928 for two cwt of coal was valued at 4/8. This translates to almost £9 today and gives a value to coal of around £90 per ton.

It might be interesting to think about what it could cost to set up a night out for the community. On Boxing Night, 1930, the British Legion Ivinghoe Branch hosted a Whist Drive and Dance. The total costs for this were £7.8.2½ (£327.52 today), of which the cost of hire and transport of the band was £3.18.0 (£172.38). Tickets were sold at 1/6 each (£3.32) and the night produced a profit of £6.0.0. (£265.20).

In 1932 the cost of an inland letter by post was 1½d (26p). By 1945 it had risen to 2½d. (30p).

Given the average wages of the time, who could resist a national draw in favour of The Derby in 1934? Tickets were sold in aid of working men's clubs up and down the country, at a cost of thrupence (62p) each. The prizes were substantial for the time - £50 (£2,210) to the winner, £10 (£440.20) to the second drawn and £5 (£220.10) to the third. Between 1927 and 1939 the price of a Wireless Licence (for radio) remained static at 10 shillings per year – taking into account the fluctuation of values, staying steady at approximately £16 to £18 modern equivalent.

Turning the attention now to war time (1939-45) costs, in 1940 the following florist's bill was paid. The florist in question was G E Woolford of Aylesbury.

<i><b>Item</b></i>	<i><b>shillings</b></i>	<i><b>pence</b></i>
Fern		8
2 Sea Lavender	1	6
1 White Aster	1	6
2 Sweet Sultan	2	0
1 doz. Crimson	3	6
1 doz. Crimson & Orange	3	6
1 doz. Mixed Cars.	2	6
4 Leaves	2	0
2 Chaplet Frames	1	0
	18	2

I think that this was quite a large bill for the time and I am not sure what a “chaplet frame” might be. However, a dozen mixed carnations would work out at £4.65 today! Where war time goods were available, they obviously came with a price premium. Another invoice shows a supplier in Tring selling “one H T battery” for 9/3, together with a carrier for it at 2/6 and charging sixpence for fitting (£21.85 in today's equivalent values). Wartime transport would have been difficult and the cost of bicycles, should they be available, expensive. Fancourt's of Tring sold, on Dec 6<sup>th</sup>

1940, a Ladies Safety Model “Wearwell” cycle, complete with pump and bell for Five Guineas (£188 equivalent). Those supplied by Halfords are roughly the same price today, but in 1940 they did not have the advantage of foreign trade and its associated low cost labour force riding on the backs of huge economies of scale.

Would we go back to those days? When I went to grammar school in 1960 at the age of eleven, I was given an “emergency shilling” to keep in my wallet, this sum being enough to get me home from 13 miles away via three different bus services. Today, that would be the equivalent of 65 pence - but think how public transport costs have increased – a boy would be lucky to travel two stops for that sort of money! I wonder what our descendants will make of today’s costs in, say, fifty years time?

**Dennis Trebble Archivist**

### **Membership**

Your membership fees for 2012-13 are now due. You will find a membership subscription slip inside this newsletter. Please pay by cheque if possible.

Thank you to those that may already have paid at the Easter Open Day. Remember the fees are £10 for a single member and £15 for joint membership.

**Bill Barnard Membership Secretary**

### **Drayton Beauchamp**

Following 4 years of painstaking research and interviewing nearly 200 people by Margaret Ross and photographing of residents by David Lonsdale, Drayton Beauchamp are pleased to announce printed copies of '**The Village That Time Passed By**' are now available. This impressive A4 book contains 168 pages including over 200 colour photographs. It was felt that the village's surprising rich history should be recorded, along with former and current resident's memories of times gone by and as it is now. Copies can be obtained from member **David Lonsdale**, on 01296 631791 or [\*\*lonsdales@hotmail.co.uk\*\*](mailto:lonsdales@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Bucks Family History Society Open Day**

**28<sup>th</sup> July 10.0- 4.0 pm at Grange School Wendover Road Aylesbury**

Once again the Museum will be hosting a table at this popular event.

**Sandra & Bill Barnard**

**Front Cover...The Late Reg Jellis with his tractor on an Open Day.**

**Picture by Dennis Trebble.**

## **Open Days 2012**

Early May B.H. Monday **May 7<sup>th</sup>**

### **Tappalachian Dancers**

Spring B.H. Monday **June 4th**

Sunday **17th June**

Sunday **15th July**

Sunday **12th August**

B.H. Monday **August 27<sup>th</sup>**

### **Morris Dancers- Wicket Brood**

Sunday **16th September**

Sunday **14th October**

### **Tappalachian Dancers**

#### **Opening times from**

11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Admission charges adults £5

children £2. Members free.

## **Committee Officers:-**

### **Chairman &**

#### **Museum Site Manager**

John Childs **01582 833501**

### **Vice Chairman &**

#### **Museum Manager**

Norman Groom **01582 605464**

### **Treasurer**

John Youngs **01582 833678**

### **Secretary**

Peter Keeley **01582 792701**

## **Other Committee Members:-**

### **Archivist**

Dennis Trebble **07738786210**

### **Programme &**

#### **Minutes Secretary**

Sue Lipscomb **01296 630578**

**Museum Website:- [www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk](http://www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk)**

**Hits to 13th April 2012 ...40154**

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Anne Ball **01442 822672**

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#### **Computer Records Officer**

Sandra Barnard **..email**

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### **Craft Co-ordinator**

Brenda Grace **01296 668167**

### **Dancers**

Margaret Elliott **..email**

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### **Trading Secretary**

Jeannette Wallis **01296 661997**

## **Holding Trustees:-**

Don Levy

Bob Morgan

John Wallis