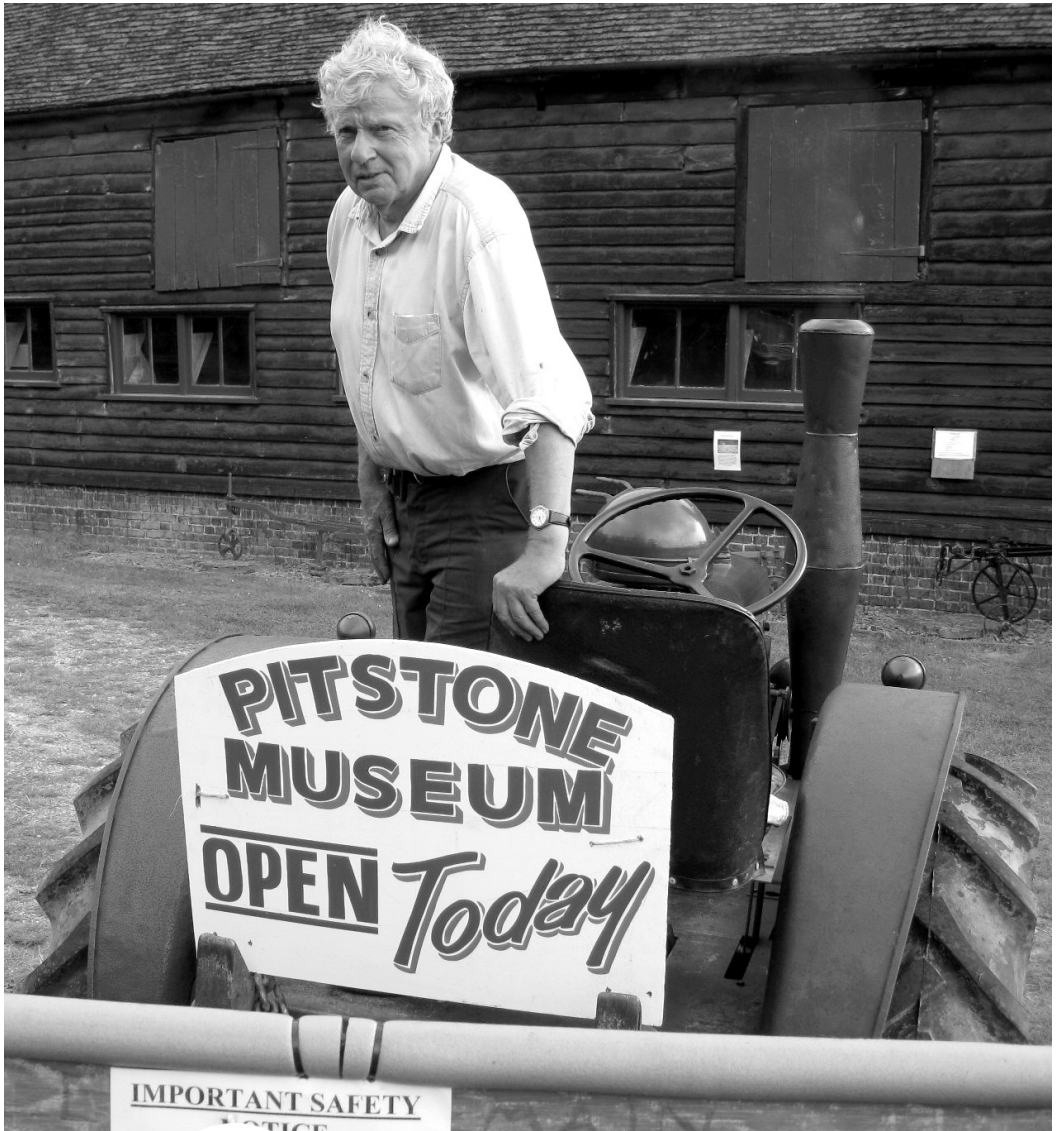


Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



Spring 2013

Museum Report – April 2013

Without doubt the last 3 months have been the worst weather conditions we have had to face at the museum that I can ever remember. The periods of cold, rain and drizzle followed by snow and bitter winds has held up progress on many projects. The new Carpenters Shop has however been finished apart from painting, but the cold has held this up as well and must be completed before we can furnish the room. The only thing that has increased, and this due to the cold, is our electricity bill to keep people from freezing and the length of coffee and lunch breaks which are taken in a room where we can just take the edge off the bitter chill prevailing outside. Several smaller projects are being worked on; Paul's flatbed trailer he is constructing is coming on well and we are rebuilding and repairing a number of our picnic tables. The fencing to screen off the building materials yard at the rear of the new carpenters shop is finished apart from fitting some form of gate and the Homes & Garden room has been given a face lift. One of the projects that is making progress is the attempt to identify, catalogue and photograph every item in the museum, a room at a time. This information has previously been held on our master database which is now approaching 20 years old and is full of errors and inconsistencies. We are working from Excel spreadsheets as they are quick and easy to use and then the data is being passed to Sandra to update the master database on a programme called Modes. We have a total of some 3000 items on the data base, excluding our huge store of photographs and papers, and we are about half way through the project which is scheduled to be completed in about 18 months time.

The unusual "Murad" lathe made in Aylesbury around the late 1950's has been installed in Jeff's Workshop and is working. Unfortunately the planned article on the Murad firm has had to be postponed until the next Newsletter due to lack of time available to write it. At the time of writing this report the temperature is now just above 5 degrees and Spring is promised for next week.

Norman Groom Museum Manager.

A Feather in our Cap

A couple of weeks ago we received notification from the Arts Council that our latest application for Accreditation had been accepted. Although this was an update from previous years the standard had increased considerably with a significant amount of additional paperwork needed. Thanks must go to Peter, our Secretary, who has done the bulk of this work in spite of his medical problems.

Sometimes the question has been asked, why do we bother about Accreditation and what does it offer? It is a recognition of the achievements made by a relatively small number of hardworking volunteers who have turned the farm buildings, full of rural items, often in a poor condition and stored in unsuitable buildings, into a successful museum that can stand alongside other museums like the Chiltern Open Air Museum and the Milton Keynes Museum. It also opens the doors to grants which we have obtained in the past.

The story of Accreditation started soon after we obtained our lease on the site in 1991/2. We had by then obtained Charitable status and applied to the then MGC (Museum & Galleries Commission) for museum "Registration" which predated the term Accreditation. This was early days and things were still disorganised but we were granted Provisional Registration and the long road to full Registration and then on to Accreditation started. During this period of some 20 years, the MGC changed to MLA (Museum, Libraries & Archives) and finally, in the last two years, the Arts Council. The reason given for this latest change was apparently to save money and combine the work of the MLA with the existing Arts Council. However every time a change occurred the amount of paperwork increased and the amount of documentation we hold today is considerable and has to be updated relatively frequently.

In the early years of the museum we had a lot of personal contact between individuals from the governing body and our museum and this was of considerable help. This has now reduced to a single individual referred to as a Museum Mentor (previously a Curatorial Adviser) who we usually meet once a year. A certain amount of paperwork can be of help but today one gets the impression that those that ask for it have no practical experience of museums such as ours which is housed in farm buildings, some listed and dating from the 1800's, and the type of rural life artefacts we have to handle, restore and display. We are often asked to monitor and record humidity levels and temperatures which in practice differ little from the outside values and could just have easily been obtained from the daily weather forecast. However we are now precariously placed at the top of the tree and we must in the future make an effort to hold this position to avoid wasting all the years of work gone before. We are told that if we wish to continue as an accredited museum we shall need to start our application to do this in September 2014 with a deadline of February 2015 for completion.

Norman Groom

Help, help, help!

We are desperate for more help at the museum if we are to maintain and improve the standard of the museum and retain our Accreditation status. We have lost a number of key people in the last year or two and we have been unable to replace them. Those working at the museum are not exactly youngsters and many of us are feeling the effect of old age creeping on. Our volunteer strength is still mainly on the building, construction and general DIY skills and we do need extra help in these areas.

Our biggest problems are however with the museum displays. With over 3000 exhibits we need more people to look after the individual rooms, to create new displays, to ensure that all items are correctly numbered and displays labelled, to clean and in general to look after all aspects of museum exhibits. The people we are looking for will probably be retired or just retired, either individuals or couples, with time on their hands and looking for something to be involved with. Common sense and a sense of responsibility is the only requirement; experience and knowledge comes with time. Work at the museum covers every aspect of work that one could think of. If you think you could bring your experience or knowledge, however small, to help at the museum we would love to hear from you.

You can call into the museum any Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday or on any of the open days and have a chat to myself or any volunteer/committee member and hopefully we can rebuild our dwindling volunteer force.

Norman Groom.

Easter Open Day



Potters braving the cold weather

Taking tea in the barn

Pictures by Bill Barnard



Membership

Membership fees for 2013-14 are now due. You will find a membership subscription renewal slip and Gift Aid form 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



Easter visitors **exploring**

Picture by
Bill Barnard

Visit of Milton Keynes Prep School ...21ST MARCH 2013

It has been a long held viewpoint that the museum collection could be a useful resource for schools, though in recent years we have not seen so many use the site. The reasons for this are many fold, not least the withdrawal of funding for such visits and the significant amount of health and safety hoops that have to be jumped through to make them happen. We were surprised and gratified, then, that toward the end of last season a teacher from Milton Keynes Prep School visited us in order to see if we could provide facilities for a visit to study “engines” as a topic. This duly took place in October, though the surprise was that we were presenting to a large group of five and six year olds. Fast forward to just before Christmas and the same teacher approached us again with a view to looking at a different topic for the same age group – this time, “communications” and the visit to be at the end of March when, as we then thought, the weather would be warmer.

During my time as a teacher of secondary level pupils I had not really thought much about such creature comforts as toilets – if someone wanted to go they would generally find a way! This age group are different – they all needed to be put through the system when they arrived and again when they left. The consequence was that at 9.00am on the day of their visit I was busy wearing my marigolds, cleaning the ablutions and ensuring a reasonable degree of hygiene. Sue arrived shortly afterward and we set about organising the Meeting Room where they would have their safety briefing and where Sue, much to her surprise, was going to be presenting three different sessions on telephony. I, for my part, found myself in the radio/television room doing similar things, whilst one of their teachers was stationed in the cockpit of the Lancaster doing his part. The three groups rotated between us and were full of enthusiasm.

I was pleased to see that the staff had done their homework – all the children were muffled in woolly hats, anoraks, Wellingtons, scarves and gloves. The museum can be a bitingly cold place at this time of year and we did not want the youngsters to suffer. They

came prepared with packed lunches, fruit and squash and were enthused by what they had seen if their chatter over lunch was any guide. The visit was generally deemed to have been a success and apart from having to run a vacuum cleaner over the floor of the Meeting Room and turn off the taps in the toilets, all was back to normal, in readiness for the society's Thursday evening meeting. The lady in charge of the party has recommended us to another local prep school and they are coming on the 21st May to do the same topic to roughly the same age group. I hope that we are on the cusp of spreading the word to more schools and that we can help educate the next generation in the importance of places like ours.

Footnote: Before Christmas I gave a presentation about the museum and its artefacts to the Leighton Buzzard Society. They have come back to us and have organised an evening visit in July. I also, it seems, have volunteered to give a talk on the Secrets of the Museum to Brenda's Over 60's group. The more of this kind of thing we do, the better.

Dennis Trebble Archivist

Give us this day our daily bread.

The history of harvesting grain follows an evolutionary trail of truly Darwinian proportions. The grain silos at the Museum, although architectural gems, are an integral part of this amazing revolution.

Consider the change from men with scythes, and women making up the sheaves, then the reaper binder, steam driven threshing machines and onto today's combine harvester, with the driver in his or her air conditioned cab with entertainment playing Vivaldi with the whole works controlled from outer space!

At the end of WWII the American combines came into play which in turn produced a prodigious volume of grain which had to be dried and stored quickly to prevent it from rotting. The Government of the day were searching for a system to address this problem. The National Institute of Agricultural Engineering needed a pilot scheme to test the validity of a ventilated grain storage system for bins. To this end they required a medium sized farm, together with a farmer who would be prepared to finance, build and run such a scheme. In this they were exceptionally lucky in finding Jeff Hawkins here at Pitstone Green Farm. Not only that but much of the design work was also in Jeff's hands.

Six round concrete silos, eleven feet tall and thirteen feet in diameter built by farm labour. They had a system of ducts through which heated air was blown into the base of the silos.

The construction of the silos was in step with the times, the concrete being reinforced by aircraft landing strips and cables off barrage balloons. The whole group of silos, together with the ancillary machinery to move the grain within the system is housed under a Dutch barn. Sadly the roof of the barn has now failed. And tentative efforts are being pursued to get it repaired.

Nowadays silos on the farms have largely been replaced by grain stored on a floor of a large barn and moved by front loading tractors. However the floors still have a ventilating system.



**Rick barn on left
(now demolished)
and side view of
silo's before the
Science room and
shop were built.**

**A museum
archive picture
originally
published in the
Farmers Weekly.**

The silos at the museum are a part of the epic endeavour to feed us.

Nigel Thompson

Front Cover

Nigel Thompson with his Field Marshall Tractor at an open day last year.

Picture by Brenda Grace

A thank you to Max of Cuddy Demolition

This was for their kind donation of wood used for the construction of new trailers.

Paul Chapman

Pitstone Masters

We have on our computer at the Museum a very comprehensive document produced by Norman called "Pitstone Masters." Within this document are many interesting articles about Pitstone. I intend to print some of these in the Newsletters. The next article is an evaluation of the movements in the population of Pitstone using the censuses, up to the 1851 census.

Sandra Barnard

Pressure of Numbers

The early census report reveal a sharp rise in the population of Pitstone between 1801 and 1831 when the total figure rose from 275 to 436, representing a net gain of 161 or over

30%. Most of the increase seems to have occurred after 1811 and was greatest between 1821 and 1831. In some neighbouring parishes such as, for example Ivinghoe and Edlesborough, the rise was proportionally higher than in Pitstone, and in a number of parishes in the Vale of Aylesbury it was higher still at well over 50%. In others the rise was relatively slight.

The picture then is one of complex variations of a general theme of expansion. Whilst these variations may to some extent reflect the actual differences in birth rates, there is no doubt that the local migration was an even more important factor and this in turn was influenced by differences in rural economies of the parishes concerned and by differences in the degree to which the laws of settlement were enforced. Economically, if we leave rural industries out of the picture, there seems to be a broad contrast between arable parishes like Pitstone which offered employment on a comparatively large scale, and the primarily grassland parishes where labour requirements were somewhat less. These differences were not however, in every case reflected straightforwardly in the population figure because social and legal factors operated to separate residence from employment. A prosperous “closed” parish whose authorities took pains to exclude indigent newcomers might draw much of its labour force from a poverty stricken “open” parish where no such control was exercised.

In Pitstone the picture revealed by the 1851 census, the first to give birthplaces, is of a relatively immobile population. About 70% of the total were said to be born in the parish, of the remainder, 8% were born in Ivinghoe and altogether 90% were born within 5 miles radius. The immigrants can be categorised as follows: -

Wives of men born in Pitstone.	23
Husbands of women born in Pitstone.	17
Children of men born in Pitstone.	15 (11 families)
Couples & their children born outside Pitstone	29 (12 families)
Single men servants.	10
Single women servants.	8
Children under 15 living with relations	2
Adults 15 & over living with relations.	14
Widows.	6
Widowers.	3
Total	127

It can be seen that most of the migration was linked to marriage, kinship or service. Only 12 families were immigrants in the full sense of the term and these had evidently come into the parish over a long period of time; half of them were labouring families. The proportion of families- over half- having one parent born outside the parish may seem high at first glance but it hardly compares, for example, with the situation reported at Cardington in Bedfordshire in 1782 when out of 109 families only seven had both parents born in the parish.

There is no way of knowing how closely the 1851 figures reflect the situation at the beginning of the century, but there is no evidence of large scale immigration at that time and some signs that active steps were being taken to keep out undesirables likely to become a charge on the rates.

It would seem then, that most of the increase in the population of Pitstone between 1801 and 1831 must be accounted for by the natural increase and there may even have been a net loss by emigration. The demographic origins of this increase, like those of the corresponding national increase, go back well before 1800. Unfortunately, the state of the parish registers is such that it would be unsafe to base any precise calculations on figures derived from them. Nevertheless, it is clear that the age of marriage – a major factor in determining fertility- was already low in 1800 and remained low thereafter.

The relative stagnation of Pitstone's population after 1830 is most readily explained in terms of increasing out-migration caused in part by the shortage of housing. Housing was of course a key factor in regulating the size of population of any community. Increasing numbers sooner or later required more houses. Within limits, expansion could continue for some time by means of increased concentration of people in existing houses. This is what happened in Pitstone. According to the census reports the number of houses in the parish rose from 60 in 1801 to 76 in 1831, representing an increase in average household size from about 4.5 to 6. Moreover, a close study of the estate maps and deeds makes it clear that half the additional dwellings were new buildings and that they were made up roughly as follows: -

New buildings.	6
Sub-divisions.	12

Thus not only were the household getting larger but many of the houses were getting smaller. A few (?) of the sub-divided buildings were redundant farmhouses but most were cottages. In addition, at least 3 cottages were pulled down and two were rebuilt.

After 1831, when the population had levelled out for a time, changes in the housing stock are increasingly difficult to follow in detail. According to the census there were 81 inhabited houses in 1841 and 76 in 1851 living in "buildings".

Other records show the following: -

New buildings.	8
Subdivisions.	3-5
Pulled down.	At least 6

1891 Pitstone Census

This was reported in The Bucks Herald on Saturday July 15th 1891.

The Population. - The recent census shows that there are 456 inhabitants, viz., 214 males and 242 females. There are 104 inhabited houses, 13 uninhabited, and 48 persons occupy less than five rooms.

Programme 2013

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

Thursday 16 May 13

An Evening of Music

Ron and Barbara Hartwell will be hosting this event in their home (16, Ridgeway Road, Chesham HP5 2EG) and not at the Museum. It will need to be pre-booked using my email [**Sue.Lipscomb@btopenworld.com**](mailto:Sue.Lipscomb@btopenworld.com). Those attending will see a unique collection of Player Pianos and a Roll playing Reed Organ. After a brief talk on the history of these instruments and how they work they will be demonstrated, after which you will be encouraged to have a go yourself.

Visit to Waterperry Gardens – Wednesday 19th June 2013

I'm delighted to be able to tell you about a visit I have arranged to Waterperry on the evening of June 19th at 7p.m. which has come highly recommended by Hazel and John Barber. Gordon Dempster has been involved with the gardens and lived on site for 39 years. He has master-minded a collection housed in the Museum of Bygone Implements and is also an authority regarding the nearby church which houses stained glass dating from 1220 and box pews. We would arrive at 7pm in the car park at Waterperry Gardens

[**http://www.waterperrygardens.co.uk**](http://www.waterperrygardens.co.uk)

We would have the benefit of Gordon's expertise and knowledge in the museum and would be able to visit the church, the gardens and garden centre although plants would not be on sale for us during an evening visit. Light refreshments will be available during the evening. The visit is restricted to 25 people. The cost will be £2.50 per head, payable on the evening, if we have 20 or more people. With fewer people the cost per person would increase a little.

Please book this visit using my email address [**Sue.Lipscomb@btopenworld.com**](mailto:Sue.Lipscomb@btopenworld.com)

Thursday 20 June 13

Indiana Jones meets Horticulture: The Planthunters that transformed our Gardens

Sandy Primrose trained as a microbiologist and his career has spanned work in the pharmaceutical industry, technology consultancy and the Government Health Protection Agency. He now lectures on board cruise liners. He is a passionate gardener and is fascinated to learn about the stories behind the plants he grows. This talk covers plant hunting from the 17th century to the present day.

Thursday 18 July 13

Cheese Wine and Antiques

This popular evening with Stephen Hearn is appearing once again. The museum will be open from 6.45p.m., and then the refreshments will be served at 7.15p.m. The evening will cost £6.00 for members and £8.00 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. You will need a ticket for this event and a booking form is enclosed with our newsletter.

Hobbies Evening with Supper – Thursday 15th August 2013

Our Hobbies Evening is one I always enjoy. I would, however like to see more members and friends involved in the evening, either setting up a table to showcase their hobby or walking round to see other people's interests on show. Please encourage friends to come along, particularly if they have fascinating hobbies of their own! In order to encourage more people to attend I am providing a supper alongside this event. It will probably take the form of salads and a range of quiches with wine and soft drinks. The Museum will be open from 6.45pm to allow time to set up your tables and food will be served at about 7.15pm allowing plenty of time to browse afterwards. This event will need to be pre-



booked using the form enclosed with the newsletter. PLEASE DO SUPPORT THIS EVENT.

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

Our meeting on 21st March '13

This meeting was presented by Peter Smith who began making state coaches back in 1977 and brought with him a selection of one eighth scale models of coaches used during the latest Royal Wedding and at the recent opening of parliament.



Each model takes up to two years to complete. His models have won 49 cups, trophies and medals over the years and he is the only person who is allowed to take measurements of the coaches at Buckingham Palace!

Sue Lipscomb Programme Secretary

Date for your diary

Bucks Family History Society Open Day

Although the Museum will not have a table there this year this event will be on

27th July 10.00- 4.00 pm at Grange School
Wendover Road Aylesbury.

Open Days 2013

Early May B.H. Monday **May 6th**

Whitchurch Morris Men

Spring B.H. Monday **May 27th**

Sunday **9th June**

Barrel Organ

Sunday **14th July**

Tappalachian Dancers

Sunday **11th August**

Wicket Brood Morris Men

B.H. Monday **August 26th**

Sunday **8th September**

Sunday **13th October**

Opening times from

11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Admission charges adults £6 children

£2. Members free.

Committee Officers:-

Chairman &

Museum Site Manager

John Childs **01582 833501**

Vice Chairman &

Museum Manager

Norman Groom **01582 605464**

Treasurer

Position vacant

Secretary

Peter Keeley **01582 792701**

Other Committee Members:-

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John Wallis

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