

Pitstone and Ivinghoe

Museum Society Newsletter



Summer 2013

Museum Report – July 2013

So far the museum open days this year are a considerable improvement over those of 2012. In spite of the bitter cold weather at Easter we still had a reasonable turn out and the two Bank Holiday Mondays were well up to scratch. The June and July Sunday open days however were not so good but followed the pattern of previous years.

With two Wedding Receptions already this year, two private birthday parties still to come and several school and adult visits on our booking sheet, our financial situation for 2013 looks promising. Dennis our Archivist has given one or two talks to other societies, one resulting in a return visit to the museum. The museum has also been very popular with two of the Milton Keynes Prep Schools resulting in several visits and one booking still to come. One school visit was from the local Brookmead School.

The very cold and long winter and other factors have affected our work load with projects lagging behind what was planned. Our new Carpenters Shop was scheduled to be opened to the public by this Easter but we are still hoping it will be ready before the end of the open season.

One major project we have taken on, which was not originally in our Forward Plan, is to complete the refurbishment work in the loft above the meeting room in order to house a new exhibit. Earlier this year we were offered a collection of artefacts that belonged to a Mr Cook of Stopsley, near Luton. Initially this was rejected due to lack of space but following a recent visit to see the collection, we have now changed our minds and we would like to accept the offer. The collection can only be described as a 'mini Pitstone' and all the individual items have been fully restored.

The work to make the loft suitable to house the collection is quite extensive, especially as we have to ensure that we do not, in the future, have a roof collapse like what happened in the Big Barn in 2012. The structure of the brickwork at the end of the building due to past subsidence has always looked unsafe but Roy has made a nice job cutting out and repairing the brickwork using lime mortar, making the repairs almost invisible. With the task of lining the ceiling with insulation board between the rafters, the work is unlikely to be finished before the winter.

Another task we had planned was to develop the rear of the museum and the old cart sheds, to make the whole area more attractive to the public, that is now on hold.

Grass cutting is a major task during the summer months as we maintain William's orchard as well as our own. Our new (well second hand) gang mower has cut the

time it takes to mow the whole site from three working days to just over half a day but it keeps Paul busy as it has to be cut virtually every week. Rob still uses our smaller ride on mower for cutting the smaller areas around the site.

Over the last few years the number of volunteers has fallen steadily and we were becoming quite concerned about the problem. We are still looking for people to help with everyday duties especially on our open days but this year the situation became somewhat brighter. We have welcomed Pete and Ronnie Farrah who live in Edlesborough and who love working in the museum grounds. Pete also has experience in motor engineering and this came in very handy when our working tractor blew a head gasket. Lyn and her daughter Summer, who came as visitors on one of our open days, have also joined the team and are working with Dennis, our Archivist. Barbara Jacob, who usually helps with the catering on our open days, has now joined the Tuesday team of volunteers and helps with cleaning and sorting the exhibits together with Jean Morris, a long term volunteer.

Peter, our Secretary is still on light duties but is steadily working through cataloguing and photographing all our artefacts. In total we have over 3000 on our database to check but we are now over the half way mark. The information is collected, sorted and held on a master spread sheet and will be sent to Sandra for adding to the Modes database. Sandra has moved house over the last few weeks so the transfer of information is on hold for a while.

As with any organisation there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scene that makes the museum what it is today and we have to remember and thank all those, often unnamed, individuals for all their efforts.

Norman Groom Museum Manager.

Pitstone Masters

Another extract from our historical documents held on our computer at the Museum. This long report was prepared from a WEA course-project on local history in Pitstone, 1971-72. I will reproduce it over the next few Newsletters.

Sandra Barnard

Part 1...Pitstone 1800 – 1850 a Report by WEA

This report is intended both as a summary of some of the work done during a WEA course-project on local history in Pitstone, 1971-72, and as a rough framework for further research. It is thus very much an interim working document and comment and interpretation have accordingly been kept to a minimum. It should be noted that much of the work done by the class, especially that on family reconstitution from parish register data, has not yet advanced sufficiently for any results to be included here. We have been fortunate in the amount of documentary material available which should enable us in time to obtain a reasonably rounded picture of the village community and of village life during the period. In order to place this picture in its proper perspective, however, we will also have to explore more fully the character and history of the district as a whole.

Local History Class :- H.A. Hanley, Tutor, W.F. Comben, Mrs. J. Davis, Miss M.T.Ellaway, A.R. Gomm, D. Goseltine, J. Hawkins, Mrs. M.Humphreys, B.C. Ives, D. Levy, M. Sear.

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

General

Pitstone is one of the groups of "Icknield Way parishes" lying along the edge of the Chiltern escarpment and distinguished by their long straggling shape. The ancient parish which included a long narrow "tail" (containing the hamlets of Nettleden and Frithsden) - since transferred to the adjoining county of Hertfordshire was 7 miles in length and one mile in breadth. The total area was 2459 acres. Already by 1800, however, Nettleden (or Pitstone Upper), though technically a chapelry, was in practice virtually a separate parish with a separate incumbent and its own poor rate. It has been excluded from this study. Geology and Soils

For a succinct account of the geology of the region, see the article by Professor Mead in "Acta Geographica" 17 no. 1 (1962) written in reference to an earlier description by the Finnish traveller Peter Kahm who visited the district in 1753. The Chiltern Hills which occupy about half the area of the modern parish are the most prominent feature. Agriculturally the most important distinction is between the light chalk soils of the hills and the heavier clays in the vale to the north.

Settlement

The 1809 map shows the principal settlement at Pitstone Green situated in the low ground near the northwest border of the parish. The majority of the farms and cottages were ranged in a long shallow semi-circle which followed the line of a small stream from Coles Green southeast to a point south of Pitstone Green Farm. To the west stretched the great expanse of the common green while on the east a thin envelope of closes or crofts separated the houses from the open arable fields of the village. A quarter of a mile or so to the southeast on slightly higher ground stood the church and near it the moated Church farm. At Brook End, a similar distance to the northeast was a water corn mill worked by another small stream an inn, and a few cottages. Of outlying farms there were, in addition, to Church Farm, Yardley Farm slightly to the north of Pitstone Green and Barley End and Duncombe farms in the hills a full two miles away to the south east. At least six farms or farmyards can be distinguished on the 1809 map at Pitstone Green itself but not all were in separate occupation.

Communications

(a) Roads

It was not until the enclosure of the open fields in 1853 that the existing road system came into being. In 1800 the most important road was the Icknield Way leading northeast to Dunstable in Bedfordshire and southwest to Tring 3 miles away in Hertfordshire where it crossed the turnpike leading to Aylesbury, a further 6 miles or so to the West. Other local roads connected with the nearby villages of Marsworth on the south west, Cheddington, north west and Ivinghoe a mere half mile away on the north east and a much larger village than Pitstone. Road transport services in 1830 consisted of weekly carrier's wagons to Aylesbury and London. By 1842 there was an additional carrier service direct from Pitstone to London but the service to Aylesbury had ceased.

(b) The Grand Junction Canal

The main line of the Canal, which skirted the northwest edge of the parish, was completed about 1805. A little later, branches were constructed from Marsworth to Wendover and Aylesbury.

(c) The Railway

The London and Birmingham railway was opened in September 1838 and the branch line from Cheddington to Aylesbury in 1839. There were stations at Cheddington and Tring.

Water Supply

In addition to the streams already mentioned the 1st edition of the 6" O.S.map (c.1870) shows numerous wells.

LAND USE

The following totals are taken from the 1841 tithe apportionment summary which, however, also includes Nettleden (804 acres). The latter consisted almost entirely of woodland and enclosed park while Pitstone had only about 10 acres of wood, so a fairly clear picture can be gained.

Arable (enclosed)	318 acres.
" (open field)	885 acres.
Meadow or pasture	519 acres.
Woodland	399 acres.
Gardens & Orchards	15 acres.
Common land & roads	280 acres.

DEMOGRAPHY (POPULATION)

General

Nationally it was a period of rapidly increasing population. In Pitstone, after a sharp rise (55%) between 1801 and 1831 a plateau was reached with only a very gradual decline later in the century. This contrasts with most other rural Bucks parishes, where the peak seems to have come later. Some comparative figures are given below. It is hoped that further work on parish register data may throw light on local migration as well as on such matters as age at marriage and size of families.

Population Size (Density figures in acres per head given in brackets).

	Acreage	1801	1831	1851
Pitstone	1655	275 (6.02)	427	438 (3.78)
Ivinghoe	5618	1215 (4.6)	1648	2024 (2.78)
Cheddington	1429	273 (5.23)	375	508 (2.81)
Eddlesborough	4647	997 (4.66)	1490	1836 (2.53)
Haddenham	3274	964 (3.40)	1484	1703 (1.92)
P. Risborough	4697	1554 (3.02)	2122	2317 (2.03)
Bucks.	477151	107900 (4.42)	46977	163723 (2.91)

Sex Ratio

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851
Males	143	149	175	226	205	223
Females	132	139	178	210	219	204
Total	275	288	353	436	424	427

Age Structure

An analysis has been made of the 1851 census data. It shows that 77.75% of the population of Pitstone was under the age of 40 (the national figure was 76%) and 49.88% under 20. It also reveals, incidentally, that the preponderance of males over females in 1851 was greatest in the age groups 0-4 (35M. 18F.) and 20-24 (24M. 14F.)

Migration

(a) Birthplaces

1851 An analysis of the census shows that 70% of the population of Pitstone were born in the parish; 8% were born in Ivinghoe. About 90% were born within a five mile radius.

(b) Family Names

Of the 44 (36 omitting servants) different surnames listed in the posse comitatus of 1798, 19 are found in the 1851 census (56 surnames).

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY

General

The most useful sources of information on property distribution are the map terriers of 1809 and a later one dated 1829 (refers to the same map), a valuation of "Lower Pitstone", 1840, and the 1848 rate assessment. A difficulty is that while the two latter relate to an area which is (allowing for commons) probably not far short of the modern parish (1373 acres in 1848) the others omit some 400 acres in the region of Pitstone common. This should be borne in mind in interpreting the figures given below. The effects of the 1853 enclosure have not so far been examined. The total area of commons and roads is given as 208 acres in 1809.

Ownership of Land

a) The Ashridge estate.

The period was one of considerable expansion for the estate as a whole. In Pitstone, the enclosure "claims book." of 1853 lists purchases totalling 438 acres between 1806 and 1850. The 1809 map terrier gives a total of 680 acres of which 140 acres are indicated as recent acquisitions. The total in the 1848 rate book is 1080 acres

Holders of the estate were:

Francis, 3rd Earl of Bridgewater,	d. 1803
John William, 7th Earl	d. 1823
Francis Henry, 8th Earl	d. 1829
The Countess of Bridgewater	d. 1849 (For details of the succession see Sheahan P. 730 ff.)

(b) Other Owners

1809

337 acres. divided among 15 owners.

Owner-occupiers apparently resident in Pitstone:

Hen. Williamson 64 acres
J. Burt (miller) 3 acres

Owner-occupiers not resident:

Wm. Hayton Esq. 56 acres
Geo. Griffin (Ivinghoe) 33 acres (
W. Watts (Ivinghoe) 11 acres
Pitstone Town Land 9 acres

9 other non-resident owners of 3a. to 45a., 161 acres

1848

300 acres divided among 14 owners :

Owner-occupiers, resident:

F. Beesley, miller 5 Acres
E. Philbey, publican 5 acres

Others:

J.A. Gordon Esq., of Stocks 152 acres
(inc. 32 acres in own ccupier.)
H. Williamson, Pitstone 71 acres
Pitstone Town 11 acres

9 other non-resident owners of 1 acres to 25 acres, 61 acres

Ownership of Houses & Cottages

1809

Houses

Total of 11 "homesteads" and 3 houses;

Owner-occupiers (**H. Williamson, Jonas**

Simons) 1 home, 1 house

Ashridge estate (4 tenants) 5 homes,
1 house

5 other owners (non-resident) 5 homes, 1
house

Cottages

Total of 29 - 37 cottages (number not
always specified):

Owner-occupiers (**G. Griffin,**
W. Stevens, W. Clever) 3.

Ashridge estate 10-14

Town Houses 7?

H. Williamson 4-6

3 other owners 4

Public Houses 3

Non-resident. **G. Treacher**(Chequers),

Burr (Ship).

Not stated (Bell)

Mill Owner-occupier James Burt

1848

Houses

Total of 8 farms:

Ashridge estate 4

J.A. Gordon of Stocks 2

H. Williamson (Pitstone) 1

W. Daniels (Northants.) 1 (+
beerhouse)

Cottages

Total of 63 cottages (no owner-
occupiers)

Ashridge estate 35 (+ 1 shop)

Pitstone town 7

H. Williamson 7

H. Cook (Cheddington) 8

3 others (**J. Somes, E. Philbey,**

J. Meacher) 6

Public Houses 4

Owner-occupiers:

W. Jellis (Ship)

E. Philbey (Nags Head)

Non-residents

C. Meacher (Bell, Chequers)

Mills 2

F. Beesley (occupier) and **J. Meacher**
(non-resident)

Occupation of Land

Sizes of Holdings in acres (omitting occupiers not resident in Pitstone)

Year	Over 150	100-150	50-100	20-50	10-20	5-10	1-5
	No. Acr	No. Acr	No. Acr	No. Acr	No. Acr	No. Acr	No. Acr
1809	1 410	2 242	2 124	3 106	1 14	3 25	- -
1829	2 533	1 133	1 89	5 140	1 11	2 11	4 7
1840	3 764	2 224	1 66	2 74	2 25	1 5	9 17
1848	3 828	1 120	2 164	1 25	- -	2 12	4 12

Present Occupiers of 1 acre to 20 acres in 1809 & 1848

1809	Henry Eustace	14a.
	William London (? Collar maker)	9a.
	James Burt (miller)	8a.
	Richard Read (blacksmith)	7a.
1848	Humphrey Tompkins (carrier)	7a.
	John Williamson	5a.
	John Short (straw factor)	4a.
	Francis Beesly (miller)	3a.
	William London (collar maker)	3a.
	Edmund Philby (publican)	2a.

To be continued

Local Photographic Competition

Every year the United Benefice of Ivinghoe with Pitstone, Slapton and Marsworth hold a photographic competition. The winner's photographs are used on their calendars.



Their 2014 calendar features one of my photographs (above) taken at one of our Open Days. The sale of the calendar raises funds for the churches in Marsworth, Slapton and Ivinghoe. It is available from Mick Doyle at the Vicarage or contact him by email atmickdoyleconsult@btinternet.com or via their website <http://www.ipsmchurches.co.uk> The photograph I took shown can be seen in the month of July in full colour. To see this in its full glory and the other photographs that were chosen, please purchase the calendar, this

way you will be supporting your local churches. The wall calendar costs £8.00 and the desk calendar £5

The Benefice includes the villages of Ivinghoe, Pitstone, Slapton, Marsworth, Horton and Ivinghoe Aston. The churches at Ivinghoe Slapton and Marsworth are used for regular worship whilst the church at Pitstone is now redundant and cared for by the Churches Historic Trust.

There is a strong core of lay participation in our benefice, which is encouraged and constantly being built upon. The priest in charge of the benefice is the Rev. Tracey Doyle.

The calendar also includes excellent photographs taken by three other members of PIMS, David Lonsdale, Geoff Travis and Behram Kapadia.

Bill Barnard

Membership

A number of you will notice that there is another membership renewal form in this quarter's newsletter. This is because I have not received your renewal for this year. Please complete it and send it, with your membership fee, to the address on the form.

Bill Barnard (Membership Secretary)

What do our visitors think of our Museum?

Recently I volunteered to devise a questionnaire to discover the answer to the above question. We felt that once we had some answers they would guide the future development of the Pitstone Green Museum. So far I have spent some time during two of our Open Days, accosting unsuspecting visitors and with their permission asking them a series of questions. Once I have a larger sample of views, I have only completed 28 so far, I will try to collate them so that the information is easily accessible, but for now I intend just to give you a taster.

It appears that our visitors travel considerable distances to reach us for an Open Day, Luton, Hemel Hempstead, High Wycombe and Bletchley were mentioned as well as our regular and more local supporters. Often they come because of a personal recommendation but the road signs and leaflets also give them the incentive they need to travel. About half were new visitors which means we have many regulars too.

When asked which areas were their favourites there were several areas that were mentioned time and time again. These were the workshops, 1940s room, the Lancaster, farm machinery, our big barn with its wooden carts, the model railways and the lace making. It became apparent that anything of a 'hands on' nature appealed to both children and adults alike and many wished there were more demonstrations and opportunities to try things for themselves. All were very keen to recommend the museum to others and generally felt that the entrance fee presented good value for money as did the refreshment area.

I asked specific questions concerning the ease of access to all areas of the site and there were a few issues that were highlighted but mostly people accepted that it was a farm and as such could not be made totally accessible to all. There were good ideas when I asked about

possible improvements we could implement. Many of these ideas revolved around improved signage on the site and more 'interpretation boards' alongside some of our exhibits.

The additional comments that I asked for at the end of the questionnaire were particularly revealing and I would like to end by quoting some of these;-

'This is not a traditional museum but a folksy collection of contrasting items that all work well together.'

'A pity it's not open more frequently, particularly during the school summer holiday.'

'We love the enthusiasm of the volunteers.'

'Even the cobwebs add charm!'

'It's excellent that the parking is free.'

'We wish there was more seating around the site and particularly in the refreshment area.'

'It needs to maintain the country flavour so that it stays authentic.'

'Why not update the advertising signs?'

'Sun umbrellas would give welcome protection in the refreshment area.'

'Why not have CHILDREN FREE days.'

'We have had a fantastic afternoon here and everyone has been so friendly and welcoming.'

It may be, when you read this article, remembering that there are just a few regular volunteers who are involved with the maintenance and development of the site, that there are certain areas that you would love to become involved with yourself. If so, do not hesitate to contact one of the committee. I can assure you that you would be greeted with open arms!

Sue Lipscomb

Programme 2013

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

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 Spring newsletter.

Thursday 19th September 2013

The Grand Union Canal and Reach Out Plus

Martin Chapman is coming from the charity Reach Out Plus to talk to us about the history of the Grand Union Canal and about his role in providing canal boat holidays for the disabled and disadvantaged, particularly young people.

Thursday 17th October 2013

The Greensand Trust

Hear about the work of the Greensand Trust, a local environmental charity that works with local communities and landowners to conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape, wildlife and history of the greensand ridge. Alexe Rose will tell us about one of the sites which is managed by the Greensand Trust; Rushmere Country Park.

Thursday 21st November 2013

AGM + The Chilterns, Chalk & the Span of Geological Time

Have you ever wondered what the difference is between a coombe and a bourne, a water table and a spring line or just what an escarpment might be? How did they come about and what did the Age of the Dinosaurs or the last Ice Age have to do with this? Take a journey across 130 million years and find out! Dennis Trebble, our Museum Archivist will be here to enlighten us.

Thursday 19th December 2013

Films from the Archives

Frank Banfield will be returning once again with his amazing film archive. He has a vast collection of 16mm cine films, and will choose a selection, mainly of local interest, dating from the 1930s to the 1970s. These films will be interspersed by our usual mince pies and mulled wine.

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@bopenworld.com



**Left:-
Picture by
Norman Groom**

The Big Barn
decked again for
a wedding

**Cover Picture:
By Bill Barnard**

Mill display at
the far end of the
Big Barn

Open Days 2013

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:-

Archivist

Dennis Trebble **07738786210**

Programme &

Minutes Secretary

Sue Lipscomb **01296 630578**

Publicity Secretary

Anne Ball **01442 822672**

Membership Secretary &

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John Youngs **01582 833678**

Craft Co-ordinator

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Dancers

Margaret Elliott ..email

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Holding Trustees:-

Don Levy

Bob Morgan

John Wallis

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