

# *Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter*



*Autumn 2013*

### **Museum Report – September 2013**

There is little to add to the previous report other than to say we are still progressing on our various tasks. All this year's birthday parties, group and school visits are now finished but have proved very successful. I think the word will spread how enjoyable they proved to be and we hope this will bring in more bookings for 2014. At the time of writing this report we still have one open day to go but financially it has been a good year. The visitor numbers on our Sunday open days are still not very good even if the weather proved to be fine but the Bank Holidays at least came up to expectations.

One of the private group bookings resulted in Roy Smith and his wife Chris joining the society. Roy is now working as a volunteer and his wife has offered help with the catering on our open days.

The only new project we have started is the refurbishment of the Shepherds hut that stands in our front orchard. The wheel axles and their supporting timbers are in a pretty bad state but we are hoping to replace the timbers and refit the axles so that we can move the hut to a more suitable site for work during the winter months. We will probably re-site it next year to a more suitable location and have it open to the public together with other artefacts we have associated with sheep farming.

Refurbishment of the loft above the meeting room is still progressing but we are making headway now and hopefully the ceiling at least will be completed before the end of the year and we can start arranging transport for the collection that will be displayed in the loft. Most of the work on the end wall of the loft, just under the clock has been completed but there is some work still to do on the door frame and painting of the outside woodwork to prevent further deterioration.

One other project that we initiated a few years ago was to get the corrugated roof over the silos replaced to prevent ingress of water. Initial interest from the National Trust has vanished and we are again looking how this could be accomplished. It is early days yet but we have started making enquiries.

Our new carpenters shop was opened to the public on our last open day and we are hoping it will be a great asset as a working day to day carpenters workshop as well as an exhibit.

We have had our Massey Ferguson Combine Harvester out of the New Grain Barn and given it a run and cleaned it up. It was given to us by Humphrey Williamson and used in the fields off the Cheddington Road. Jeff Hawkins used it for a while but found it unsuitable and obtained his own in the end. I remember Jeff's was a big yellow combine and we used it to thresh some sheaves that we had cut with the reaper binder for some film work. The resulting grain was sold back to the farmer in exchange for the loan of a section of his crop used in the filming.

Rob Barber had a very unusual find in that he discovered the original log book for the combine on EBay. This is now in our possession.

All the other day to day work goes on at the museum, including the endless task of cataloguing the artefacts, grass mowing, equipment repairs, exhibit maintenance, building maintenance and of course all the offsite work but with a recent increase in volunteer numbers the tasks are made somewhat easier.

**Norman Groom Museum Manager.**

### **Income/Expenditure Returns for Eaton Bray RDC 1918-31**

Recently we were given some papers that included the above mentioned returns. At first, they seemed interesting enough but didn't stand out in any way. I scanned them briefly and soon began to realise that within the figures presented, there was a story to be told. Quite clearly here were correlations to be made between various times of expenditure and some items seemed to "spike" at particular times. I am nothing if not curious and so dug a bit deeper. The table that follows is a synopsis of some of the main expenditure and I have sought to answer questions that suggest themselves as a consequence of looking for patterns therein. All figures are given in pounds sterling.

					<b>MO</b>	<b>Parish</b>
	<b>Roads</b>	<b>Sewerage</b>	<b>Hospitals</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Assessable</b>
						<b>Value</b>
<b>1918</b>	126	140	83	0	45	17081
<b>1919</b>	74	119	64	0	65	17320
<b>1920</b>	324	239	297	110	143	18267
<b>1921</b>	178	141	187	60	88	18586
<b>1922</b>	220	187	182	274	90	19842
<b>1923</b>	411	704	247	2417	180	19281
<b>1924</b>	305	350	263	2565	180	16810
<b>1925</b>	318	315	298	2607	180	16702
<b>1926</b>	309	287	317	2585	180	16545
<b>1927</b>	431	270	266	2593	180	16794
<b>1928</b>	386	247	251	3118	180	16390
<b>1929</b>	1287	261	328	3299	180	16836
<b>1930</b>	576	293	281	5339	180	17362
<b>1931</b>	51	267	464	3948	255	Na

The seemingly obvious questions are:

- 1 Why the spike in road building in 1929?
- 2 What happened to the sewerage expenditure in 1923?
- 3 If Eaton Bray had no hospital, what does this column relate to?
- 4 Housing expenditure soars after 1923 - why?
- 5 The MO salary stays the same for 8 years whilst everything else is in a state of flux - why?
- 6 The parish assessable value plunges after an upward trend to 1923 - why?

To answer the first question we need to know something about the roads in the parish. To the one side of the parish lies the road into Dunstable and more or less parallel to this on the other side is the road to Leighton Buzzard. The parish roads from the “crossbar” of this H shape and measured eleven miles and 2 furlongs in length. It becomes evident from a glance at the map that this length of road could easily become a short cut between the two main roads to either side. In the two years after the First World War little was spent on repair and upkeep as there were more pressing things to spend a limited amount of money upon. Between 1920 and 1928 a holding job was done, repairing, re tarring and gravelling as necessary. Throughout that time, though, Britain was changing and road traffic growing. In 1929 the plunge was taken to undertake major upkeep, including the relaying of some foundations to the roads. This represented significant outlay and came at a time when Britain had yet to be affected by the fallout from the infamous Wall Street Crash of the same year. The figure for 1931 tells its own story.

In 1923, the outlay on sewerage disposal more than tripled the previous figures. Not only does this reflect a change in technology in terms of the pipes used and their method of laying, it also reflects what was happening in the housing budget. In 1923, 1926 and 1929 there were successive government acts passed that were designed to encourage local authorities to build homes for rental that were built up to a standard and not down to a price. Provision was put in place for central government loans to such authorities and the general populace still remembered Lloyd-George’s promise to build “a land fit for heroes”. The housing expenditure figures show the result of these efforts with a determination to build to the then prevalent ethos of the garden village ideal (as promulgated by Ebenezer Howard in Letchworth). In this way, people moved out of the hands of private landlords into public sector housing. The fact that these houses are now in private ownership says a lot about their build quality.

The “hospital” figure for the RDC reflects the subvention that Eaton Bray paid to Dunstable to be able to use its hospital facilities. It is to be remembered that in the times before the advent of the National Health Service, each local authority was responsible for the health care of its populace. To this end, a Medical Officer was also a mandatory requirement, though the cost of the MO seemed strangely static between 1923 and 1930. It has been suggested that this figure might not only cover

such costs but also be a convenient repository for miscellaneous expenditure not covered elsewhere.

Finally, post 1923, the parish rateable value seems to drop. The reason for this is found in the amount of agricultural land in the locale. Prior to 1923 such land was valued at 50% of the rateable value of non-agricultural land. In order to encourage further agricultural growth, after that date, it was assessed at 25% value, thereby accounting for the drop in the figures from 1924 onward.

The returns don't really belong in our archive and I have been able to find a suitable recipient for them back in their place of origin.

**Dennis Trebble, Archivist.**

### **Pitstone Masters**

Extracts 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. (See summer issue)

**Sandra Barnard**

### **Pitstone 1800 – 1850 a Report by WEA...**

#### **Part 2 Continued from last Newsletter.**

#### **SOCIAL STRUCTURE, OCCUPATIONAL AND STATUS GROUPS**

##### **General**

The most striking feature of village society in the period is its overwhelmingly proletarian character. From 1800 onwards the bulk of the population consisted of landless cottagers and there was a complete absence of landed gentry or the professions.

##### **Farmers**

The small group of larger farmers (7 in 1851) represented the aristocracy of the parish. In the country at large the social status of this class was tending to rise with increased wealth and there was a conscious striving after gentility. In Pitstone, the design of Pitstone Green Farm, rebuilt c.1830, with its carefully planned separation of kitchen and servants room from the family quarters, may be significant in this connection. On the other hand, the persistence of the living in system (see below) suggests certain paternalism. More information is needed about the style of life of the farmers and the education and marriages of their children.

##### **Shopkeepers, Dealers, etc.**

In 1851 these comprised a grocer, general dealer, miller and baker, 3 publicans, an apothecary, corn salesman and 2 straw factors. The total number of adult males employed was 17 including the heads of households. The largest single establishment was that of Francis Beesley, miller and baker, who had 5 employees. In the 1798 list this group is represented by a miller only.

##### **Rural Craftsmen**

In 1851 there was only a blacksmith, two shoemakers and a wheelwright, in all, 6 adults, 5 of whom were heads of households. Occupations listed in the Posse comitatus of 1798 were, tailor, smith, (horse) collar maker, cordwainer (i.e. shoe-maker) and wheelwright; 10 people in all. A carpenter is listed in 1841 and again in 1861, when there was also a harness maker. The 34 male straw plaiters in the 1851 census are not included here on the assumption that it

was an essentially casual or seasonal occupation for males. It is interesting that in 1809 Richard Read, the blacksmith and. William London, later described as a wheelwright, both appear as smallholders occupying respectively 9acres. and 7acres.

### **Labourers**

The situation of the labourers in the southern counties was very depressed and according to Eric Hobsbaum (historian) and others, they were actually declining for much of the period. Low wages, high prices, unemployment and general economic dependence were among the causes. In Pitstone, there were, however, several favourable factors (a) the existence of supplementary or alternative employment in straw plaiting (b) the presence of extensive commons (c) all cottages had gardens. No clear examples of labourers rising in the social scale have so far been noted.

In 1851 there were 59 agricultural labourers and one canal labourer. If the 34 male straw plaiters are added, the total represents over 75% of the working male population over 15. In 1798 the number of labourers (including servants) was 42 out of a total population of 275. Even allowing for men over 60 and those enrolled in the militia this would appear to be a substantially smaller proportion than in 1851. The absence of non-agricultural labourers in 1851 is interesting. A printed parish census abstract of 1831 gives the total number of labourers over 20, as 69 of whom 28 were "non-agricultural". Probably most were employed on "road works" which we know from the vestry book-were in progress in that year.

### **Living-in Employees and Servants**

There were 17 living-in employees in 1851 of whom 3 were employees of the miller and baker, one was a general dealer's servant and the remaining 13 (including 2 under' 15) were agricultural labourers and have been included in the section above. Six of them were born in Pitstone. The 1798 return lists 18 "servants" of whom all, or most, can safely be assumed to be servants in husbandry. In the 1841 census there were 18 but by 1861 the number had-dropped to one.

Female servants living-in numbered 6 in 1851, of whom 5 belonged to farmers. All appeared to have been imported (birthplaces included Cheddington, Aston Abbots, Great Kimble and Quainton). There were no out-servants unless a laundress is so considered. In the 1831 abstract the number of female servants is given as 5

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **General**

In Pitstone, as elsewhere, there was a trend towards fewer, larger farms. (See section on property distribution). On the other hand, the old open field system of agriculture persisted there until 1856, much later than in some other neighbouring parishes. Farming conditions in the period remained generally relatively depressed following the ending of high wartime prices for grain after 1815. The Pitstone Green Farm accounts contain much information on local conditions from c. 1839.

### **The Open Fields**

The total area of open field land is given in the 1809 map terrier as 885 acres, but its precise distribution has not yet been calculated. The principal division is between land "above hill" (i.e. on the higher ground) and the rest, the latter being allocated into 3 fields - Moor Field (incorporating West Field), Red Field (with Malm Field) and White Field. A memo in a document dated 1808 gives the rotations the "field above Icknield Way" is "every years land" and the other three are "Two crops and a fallow". The Vestry book contains, besides

references to the regulation of common grazing, the record of one meeting on the open field arrangements held in August 1833.

### **Farmers and Farms**

In 1851 the farms were as follows;

<b>Farm</b>	<b>Farmer</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Church Farm	James Proctor	358 a.
Green Farm	Moses Blinco	96 a.
Yardley Farm	Mary Tompkins	108 a.
Barley End Farm	Joseph Simmons	120 a.
Duncombe Farm	William Bigg	454 (+ 50a. common)
Pitstone Green Farm	John Hawkins	250 a.
No name	Thomas Jellis	35 a.

Several of the farms included some land outside the parish but only in the case of Duncombe Farm does it appear to have been a large proportion of the total. In 1798 the farmers had been; William Ashby, John Collins, Thomas Eustace, William Jellis, William Poulton, James Stevens, Joseph Simmons, John Tompkins, William Tompkins and John Williamson. Full details of changes in tenancies etc. have yet to be worked out. It is also hoped to examine the physical distribution of at least one of the farms in the 1809 map. Much can doubtless be learned also from surviving farm buildings etc.

### **Crops**

The 1801 Crop Returns at the Public Record Office in London (copy supplied by M.E. Turner) give the following crops and acreage for Pitstone.

Wheat 232 a.	Peas 32 a.
Barley 140 a.	Beans 96 a.
Oats 143 a.	Turnips 118 a.

The Pitstone Green farm accounts give details of cropping in 1839

Wheat 45 a.	Beans 8 a.
Barley 25 a.	Peas and Beans 9 a.
Oats 24 a.	Spring Tares 10 a.
Peas 10 a.	

Particulars given of grain "cleaned" in the same year suggest yields of 30 bushels per acre for wheat and 25 bushels for barley (34 bushels in 1843). According to J. Caird, English Agriculture in 1850-51, '28 bushels of wheat and 32 of barley were reckoned "fair average crops" in this part of Bucks. Another crop mentioned in the accounts in the 1850's is plums for which a produce of 303 baskets is recorded in 1854, yielding a profit of £92.

### **Stock**

An examination of the Pitstone Green farm accounts for 1839-40 shows that cows, pigs and fowl were kept, but not in large numbers. The total number of sheep is given in May 1839 as 336 and in May 1854 as 438.

### **Labour**

The total number employed on all the farms was 73 according to the 1851 census, which is 14 more than the numbers of agricultural labourers resident in the parish. The overall ratio works out at approximately one man per 20 acres. In the case of Pitstone Green Farm it was one man per 2 1/2 acres.

### **Methods and Equipment**

In 1798 a total of 50 horses, 5 wagons and 28 carts were recorded for the parish. The largest farmer, James Stevens (410 acres. in 1809) had 15 horses, 2 wagons and 5 carts. There is no

information about the use of farm machinery in the period. One Pitstone farmer, James Proctor, is recorded as using oxen for draught purposes in the 1860's (Eland, In Bucks, P.)

### **Markets and Prices**

The Pitstone Green Farm accounts show that the price of 35/6 to 36/6 was obtained for wheat in 1839 but the mode of sale is not clear. Plums were being sent direct to London by rail in 1854.

### **Outgoings and Receipts**

The half yearly rent for Pitstone Green Farm c. 1840 was £111-5-8. Labour costs not worked out but probably under £400. Total receipts have been calculated for 1839-40 as just over £1,500 of which almost £700 derived from the sale of grain.

**(To be continued)**

### **Pamela Horn**

We have been invited to contribute a few words about our Aunt, Pamela Horn, the distinguished social and economic historian, who died recently.

Pam was a diligent and scholarly researcher and author of almost 40 books on social topics. Her first book was based on her doctoral thesis from Leicester University on Joseph Arch, the founder of the Agricultural Labourers' Union, and was typically packed with facts and statistics of the period. One of her most popular books was 'The Victorian Schoolchild', and this was followed by a further work on 'The Edwardian Schoolchild'.

Although her research ranged over the whole national scene, she retained a fondness for the social history of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, and was especially interested in the local histories of straw-plaiting and lace-making, which she wrote about in 'Children of Straw'. Another interest was the history of domestic service, which led to volumes on Victorian and Edwardian servants. More recently, she had begun to look at the themes of leisure and life amongst all classes of society. She also still found time to write a short history of Abingdon, where she lived.

Although politically conservative by nature, she retained an intense interest in and feeling for the way in which society treated those of the poorest working classes. She was an expert in her field and was frequently consulted by documentary film-makers who wanted information and statistics.

We remember her as a kind and attentive aunt who was very happy to share her knowledge and discuss social and historical topics with her young nieces and nephews from Ivinghoe. Liz was pleased when she was able to suggest something in which she might be interested. Liz mentioned to her that when visiting Hughenden Manor, she had found it quite boring, until she had noticed the detailed household books of Disraeli's wife, Mary Anne, which gave a fascinating insight into the problem of trying to maintain a staff at a residence which was only in use for part of the year. Mary Anne Disraeli had meticulously recorded the reasons for the many staff dismissals, drunkenness being the most common!

Pam was happily married to our uncle Jack (Clifford) Horn (himself a keen student of military history), for over 40 years and missed him greatly following his death in 2009. She continued to travel and research and to be a regular visitor to County archives, to the British Library, and of course to the Bodleian Library, (though she often complained of the cold working conditions there!) She was devastated when ill-health prevented her from



continuing her work, and her death leaves a notable gap in the ranks of British social historians.

### **Elizabeth Horn September 2013**

**On behalf of Jonathan, Mary, Elizabeth and Thomas Horn.**

**Footnote** We would like to thank the Museum for the help that they gave Pamela when she needed photos etc for her researches. **Mary Saintey nee Horn**

### **Membership**

We currently have 169 members, the highest we have had for a few years. Although we are 18 members down, this was more than matched by most of the new members signing up at some of our Open Days. There is a membership renewal slip in this newsletter to remind a number of last year's members that there is still time to pay their subs for this year, otherwise this will be their last newsletter. To these people, thank you for your past support of PIMS. Single membership is £10 and joint £15.

**Bill Barnard (Membership Secretary)**

### **Cheese, Wine and Antiques Evening (18<sup>th</sup> July 2013)**

This popular event was well attended as usual, on a relatively warm evening. The cover of this newsletter has a photo of Norman Groom introducing Stephen Hearn to the audience.

Stephen, from Tring Auction Rooms, started by telling us about the current state of the antique market. He then went on to evaluate all of the objects that members had brought along. Every item was described, by Stephen, in great detail and was often followed by an amusing story of this and similar items, and finally an idea of their probably value at today's prices.

There was the usual fine array of items including small boxes, china, pottery, coins, silver trophy cup, model sailing ships, a model car, a music seat and attached stand. At the end of the evening, Stephen donated an artefact to the museum, it was a "bed warmer" consisting of a wooden frame with a container for hot coals or stones.

**Bill Barnard**



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### **Hobbies Evening (15<sup>th</sup> August 2013)**

The format for this event was different from past years. Sue Lipscomb had the bright idea of selling tickets and providing food for the evening, making it similar to the Cheese & Wine evening. In the end she sold 36 tickets, and this made the evening the most successful in years. The food was prepared and served by Sue, Anne Ball & Barbara Hartwell.

Hobbies photographs are by myself and Sue Lipscombe. Sadly the black and white photos do no do justice to the colourful displays.

The many hobbies on show included:-

**Frank Banfield** displayed a fascinating selection of assorted bric-a-brac.

**Jean Morris** displayed photos, paintings and memorabilia from The Isle of Wight

**I** entertained the ensemble with a selection from my record collection, ranging from Classical to Easy Listening to Electronic to Rock.

**Sandra Barnard** displayed a selection of Family History & Genealogy books, charts and photos.

**Nigel Thompson** showed a selection of his pottery & his wife **Libby** her cross stitch work.

**Pete Farrar** showed some of his multi-media compositions on his Apple iMac.

**Geoff & Maggie Evans** displayed model trains and carriages

**Dennis Trebble's** table had a quiz for members to try and identify a number of British car models.

**Geoff Travis**, photography and his wife **Hazel** displayed embroidery.

**Mary Chapman** - Knitting, including a colourful array of socks and also a display of lace..

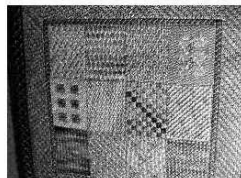
**Judith & Ken Halls** Miniature scenes and Doll's House Rooms

**Ron & Barbara Hartwell** Music boxes

**Bill Barnard**

### Newsletter Articles

These are always welcome from members. Please send any contributions preferably by email to me **Sandra** at [alexrose42@btinternet.com](mailto:alexrose42@btinternet.com). Please remember that these will be printed on A5 paper. This is important if you use photographs or charts.**Sandra Barnard**



## **Programme 2013**

All meetings are held in the Meeting Room in the Pitstone Green Museum at 8.00pm.

ALL VISITORS VERY WELCOME. fees £2.00 members £3.00 visitors.

### **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **January and February 2014** ..Still being arranged.

### **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

#### **Latimer: Listening to the Walls**

Latimer and nearby Beaconsfield were chosen for use in the second world war for the interrogation of German and Italian P.O.W'S from 1941-1945. The work was highly secret and widespread knowledge of what went on did not come out until 1997, 23 years after the news of Enigma came out. On the talk we hear what went on in the camps, why it remained a secret so long and how your speaker tried to find out more before the details came out officially! 1947-1994 the Latimer site was used for other secret uses and nearby was the "rotor base" and these two uses will be looked at as a coda. Colin Oakes

#### **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@btoopenworld.com**



#### **More Hobbies!**

#### **Cover Pictures: By Bill Barnard**

Norman introducing  
Stephen Hearn at this  
years Antiques  
Evening.

Members showing their  
enthusiasm at our  
Hobbies Evening.

### **Open Days 2014**

Easter Monday **April 21st**

Early May B.H. Monday **May 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Whitchurch Morris Men**

Spring B.H. Monday **May 26th**

Sunday **8th June**

Sunday **13th July**

Sunday **10th August**

B.H. Monday **August 25th**

Sunday **14th September**

Sunday **12th 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**

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

### **Publicity Secretary**

Anne Ball **01442 822672**

### **Membership Secretary &**

**Technical Adviser**

Bill Barnard..**email**

[w.f.barnard@btinternet.com](mailto:w.f.barnard@btinternet.com)

### **Newsletter Editor**

Sandra Barnard ..**email**

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### **Computer Records Officers**

Sandra Barnard and

Norman Groom

### **Committee Member**

Paul Chapman..**email**

[mchapman@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mchapman@blueyonder.co.uk)

### **Non Committee Posts:-**

**Book Keeper**

John Youngs **01582 833678**

**Craft Co-ordinator**

Brenda Grace **01296 668167**

**Dancers**

Margaret Elliott ..**email**

[MEchippie@aol.com](mailto:MEchippie@aol.com)

**Trading Secretary**

Jeannette Wallis **01296 661997**

### **Holding Trustees:-**

Don Levy

Bob Morgan

John Wallis

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**Registered Charity No 273931**