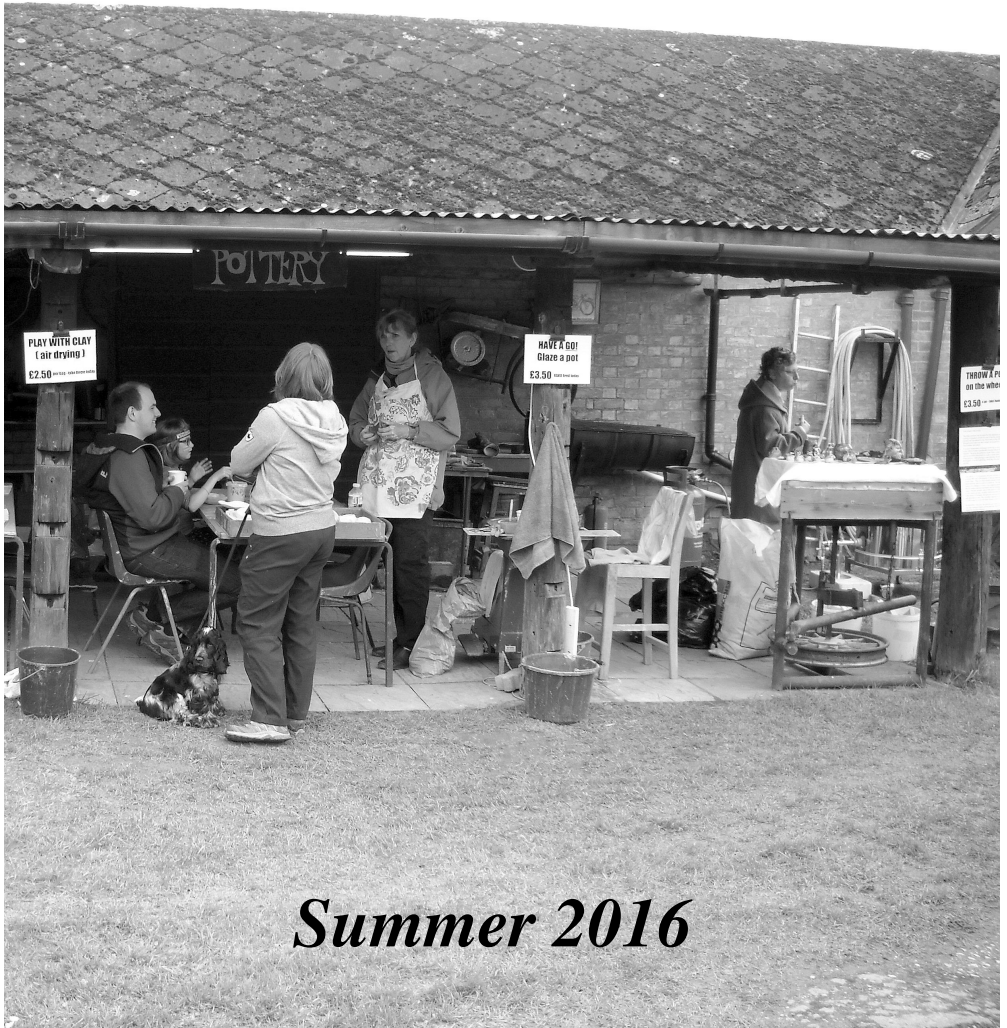


Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



Summer 2016

Museum Report July 2016

It is unbelievable how time disappears; we are now over half way through our open season but unfortunately not doing very well this year. Visitor numbers are down, probably due to the bad weather, rain, cold and wind, which seem to be the norm, rather than the nice warm sunny days we hope for. We even had a long broadcast on Three Counties Radio from the museum just before the June open day, but it rained for much of the open day and I suspect only attracted a few visitors as a result of the broadcast. The July open day was wet all morning but in spite of the sun appearing at midday it was our worst July open day for 12 years.

Roy Cutler right in his 1940's room, with Presenter Nick Coffey and Producer Claire of Three Counties Radio.



Analysing visitor numbers over 12 years shows no significant rise in numbers over that period of time other than peaks and troughs from year to year. We often blame other events on at the same time as when we are open like Wimbledon, but I suspect that other

events are always at the same week each year and does not explain our yearly ups and downs, apart from of course the weather. We have also suffered from several of our large roadside signs disappearing for reasons yet unknown. But it's far from doom and gloom, we get nothing but praise from visitors for the entertainment that we offer and the friendly atmosphere they find at the museum. We are also finding new attractions for the public to enjoy on the open days. Our financial position is strong, as most of our expensive building and construction tasks are now complete so much of the work carried out by our team of volunteers are in repairs and restoration. Two major tasks, one being the office refurbishment is still underway and the Elliott's shop rebuilt is yet to start. This is going to involve some major rearrangement to some of our displays in order to create space for the shop rebuild. The original Elliott shop in Ivinghoe has now been emptied and all the items that were intended for the museum are now in storage on site.

Volunteer numbers still steadily rise from year to year as we can offer lots of interesting projects and an enjoyable environment for people to meet and work.

Norman Groom Museum Manager

Membership 2016-17

Current membership stands at 129 people. A membership renewal slip will be found in this newsletter by people needing a reminder.

Bill Barnard Membership Secretary

Moated Mansions in Bucks

Whilst watching a drama on TV earlier this year, called "London Spy" I noticed one of the locations was a building with a wooden drawbridge across a filled moat. I instantly recognised this as Shirburn Castle in Oxfordshire, which is situated on the famous B4009 between Watlington and Lewknor. My family visited this castle on an Open Day back in the mid 1980s.



My photograph of Shirburn Castle

This was quite a coincidence as I was, at that time, reading some old articles on "Moated Mansions in Bucks" which were written for the Bucks Herald in 1898 to 1899 by a contributor, who went by the pseudonym SIGMA. SIGMA may have been more than one person, but the main person who was attributed to this name was R.S.Downs,

a well-known local Bucks' historian and a member of various historical and archaeological societies of that time. He was also, for over 40 years, Headmaster of the National (Church of England) School at High Wycombe. He retired from this post in May 1911.

I contacted the Bucks Herald and asked for permission to reproduce old articles, like this, in the PIMS newsletters. I had an email back from Adam King the Deputy Editor who gave me the OK to do this.

SIGMA mentioned many "Moated Mansions" local to Pitstone and Ivinghoe, including Moat Farm, Pitstone. Moat Farm was also known as Pitstone Place and Church Farm. In 2005 Norman Groom, Peter Keeley and Brenda Grace visited Moat Farm and the then owner John Briggs showed them around. Norman wrote a report on their visit in the January 2006 edition of our newsletter. The moat itself was empty at this time, but on a later visit it was full. I wonder how many of the moated mansion sites mentioned by SIGMA are as well preserved as Pitstone's Moat Farm.



Moat Farm from "Google Maps"

By 2009 the ownership passed on to Oliver Moore and he commissioned a survey of the house and moat by the "Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd" of Milton Keynes. This 31 page report is available online in PDF format by searching for "Moat Farm Pitstone".

The following will be the start of the serialisation of SIGMA's articles, and I hope you will enjoy reading his old words about this

subject. They were published in the Bucks Herald between October 1898 and February 1899. Anyone with a subscription to FindMyPast also has access to these old editions of the Bucks Herald and to hundreds of other local and national newspapers. **Please remember that the spelling and grammar in the late 19th century may differ from that of today.** I spent many hours using Optical Character Recognition on the newspaper columns and then had to re-read the results many times to repair the many errors that occurred.

MOATED MANSIONS IN BUCKS.

Bucks Herald, Saturday October 22nd 1898, Page 7

Among the domestic arrangements of former times, of which examples have been preserved to our own day, the moated mansion holds a prominent position, and forms one of the most interesting features, as it is a visible link connecting the present with the social life of the nation of centuries ago. The state of society during the middle ages was unsettled, and people were to a very large extent thrown upon their own resources for providing means for the protection of their lives and property, and one outcome of this condition of things was the adoption of the moat as a defence for the mansions of local magnates, religious houses, manorial farms, &c. We, consequently, find that the moat was almost universally adopted, whenever the necessary accompaniment of water to fill it was easily obtainable. That this was so can be proved by the large number of these sites which still exist, with their moats in a more or less perfect condition, notwithstanding the numerous causes which would conduce to their obliteration, after their original purpose had been served, and the necessity for their preservation had ceased to be a matter of importance of the inhabitants of the mansions which they surrounded. The remains of these moats are found all over England, and are continually to be met with in this our county of Bucks. Some time ago I made a list of these moated sites, with a few notes upon individual instances, compiled from actual observation and references to them found in the pages of local topographical works. My list comprises about 80 examples in various parts of the county, and there are, doubtless, others which have escaped my notice. I think this plainly indicates that the use of the moat as a protective agency was more extensively prevalent in the good old days than is generally supposed to have been the case. This means of defence and

provision for security was, no doubt, a survival from primitive times, suggested by the vallum of the earthwork fortification and stockade of earlier and ruder ages. The castellated dwellings of the Normans were superseded by more convenient structures, in which the battlemented parapet was retained more for ornament than use, and these in their turn gave place to the manor house, the immediate predecessor of the modern mansion of the rural pattern. In construction the moat was nearly always quadrilateral, with the four sides running parallel and at right angles to each other. The space thus inclosed varied greatly in extent, according to the necessities of the case, the physical conformation of the ground, and the supply of water. In Buckinghamshire the smaller moats inclosed no more than about a quarter of an acre; the larger inclosures have an area of $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres or more. The ditch itself, the excavation of which must in some cases have entailed a considerable amount of labour, was generally from 15 to 20 feet in width, and from 10 to 15 feet in depth, and occasionally we find these dimensions were exceeded. A drawbridge over the artificial stream gave access from the outside to the principal entrance to the mansion, and could be drawn up or let down at will. In order to provide extra defence some sites were doubly and even trebly moated, when, the supply of water was sufficient to fill them all. A country seat which owns a moat, and can also boast of a ghost, may be said to possess two most respectable claims to be considered an ancient and interesting house, and its antique charms could scarcely be heightened except by the presence of a secret chamber. This latter adjunct is seldom met with in the present day, as nearly all the old mansions containing a room of that description have been rebuilt or modernised. Very little credit is now-a-days given to stories about the apparition of disembodied spirits, and ghosts have consequently been reduced almost to a mere memory, leaving the moat in sole possession as the one remaining witness of former times and former grandeur. Our existing moats—I am speaking now of those in Bucks—are found in various conditions, some being still perfect and filled with water, some are partially destroyed, while of others only faint vestiges can be traced. Many of them are crossed by ordinary bridge, of wood or brick; but I am not certain whether there is still a drawbridge in use in Bucks or not. I rather fancy there is not; certainly I know of no instance personally, and have no record of any, and should, therefore, be glad of information upon the point, if anyone can supply it. There was one at

Bierton less than eighty years ago, and at Shirburn Castle, in Oxfordshire, not many miles beyond our borders, there exists not only a drawbridge, but it is in constant and regular use. Fishponds very frequently accompanied the moat, and in fact they formed a kind of appendage to it. Several instances of these fishponds remain, and some of them still contain fish. In many cases moats surround houses standing on the sites of the old mansions, in other instances the moats are the only indications now existing to show where a mansion formerly stood.

Bucks Herald, Saturday October 29th 1898, Page 7

Last week I made a few general remarks upon this subject by way of introduction. I now proceed to particularise some instances of the existence of these interesting relics of a former domestic and social condition of things. Where moats occur in this county it will be found that in the majority of cases only one exists in a parish. This rule is, however, broken in several instances, for in some parishes there are two, three, and in one case even four moated sites within the limits of one parish. These latter examples occur in those parishes that have been formed by the union of two or more manorial estates, each of which might possess its own capital mansion within a moated inclosure. Lavendon, a parish situated not far from Olney, in the north eastern extremity of Bucks, has within its boundaries four moated sites. The place lies in a low position, as the ancient form of its name indicates—Lawendene, signifying low-lying meadow land. The residence belonging to Castle Farm, which occupies the site of the ancient baronial castle, is surrounded by a deep moat, and foundations of some substantial edifice have often been discovered on the spot. Browne Willis informs us that in his time ruins of the castle surrounded with a moat were still to be seen. The second of these mansions is that belonging to the Manor of Uphoe. It is an ancient structure with massive walls, in places a yard and a half in thickness, such as might have been deemed a sufficient defence in themselves; but to make assurance doubly sure the site was surrounded by a moat, much of which is still existing with its accompanying fishpond. In the reign of Henry II, John de Bidun, of Lavendon Castle, founded here a religious house for Premonstratensian Canons. At the suppression, the Abbey was in ruins, and not a vestige of the conventual buildings now remain. In 1626, Robert Eccleston, who had become possessed of the manor

some ten years previous to that date, erected the present mansion out of the old materials removed from the site of Lavendon Abbey, and a stone in the building still bears his initials, "R. E." This house is situated on a moated spot, and the water is so remarkably clear that it is used for household purposes by the occupiers of the house. Not far from the Castle Farm is Park Farm, the residence belonging to which is ancient, and near it are traces of a moat which formerly surrounded a mansion where the owners of the "Park" lived.

Ivinghoe is another place in which there were formerly several distinct manorial estates, and as a consequence it can boast of, at least, three moated sites. Elsvage House, about a mile and-an-half from the town, near Cheddington, was an ancient structure standing on a moated site. I think, however, that the old place has, of recent years, been pulled down. It formerly belonged to Merton College, Oxford; but like a good deal of the other Ivinghoe property now belongs to Earl Brownlow. The hamlet of St. Margaret's, or Mergate, derives its name from a religious house for nuns of the Benedictine order which formerly existed there. Leland, temp. Henry VIII., says of the nunnery:— "It standith on an Hil in a faire Woode hard by Wathelinge Strete, on the East side of it. Humfrey Boucher, base Sunne of the late Lord Berners, did moche cost in translating of the Priorie into a Manor-place." According to Lysons the house into which the Nunnery had been converted was almost entire in 1802, but at present there are no visible remains of the Priory, though the site is marked by vestiges of a moat within which are buried portions of the building.

A farm-house in the hamlet of Great Seabrook, erected by the family whence the place derives its name, was at one time a large and substantial edifice. Near it is a moat in a very perfect state of preservation, inclosing about a quarter of an acre of ground. Edlesborough is another parish that contained several separate manors, and possesses more than one moated mansion. The principal manor house, at the south-east corner of the Green, has distinct traces of the ancient moat near, the only remnant of its former greatness. The old manor farm-house, pulled down in 1853, stood on a moated site not far from the present dwelling; and a short distance from the Tithe Farm at the western extremity of the Green is a moat

encompassing about an acre—the site of the old Rectory House—with the Dove-house within the area.

In the hamlet of Dagnall is a portion of a moat which probably inclosed the site of the old chapel-of-ease formerly existing there. The ancient mansion at Horton, another of the outlying hamlets of Edlesborough, which was inclosed by a moat, over which was a drawbridge, was pulled down in 1835, and a two-arch bridge of brick was substituted for the drawbridge. The moat is still perfect and filled with water. The manor-house of Butler's, now a farm, was inclosed by a moat surrounding an area of about an acre, which was filled up in 1861.

Bill Barnard (and SIGMA)

To be continued

THE LITTLE THINGS

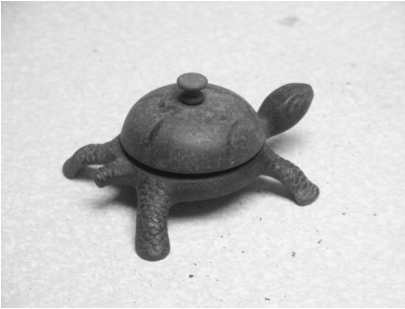
When visitors come to a museum such as ours it is very easy for them to be seduced by the big objects on display. The Crossley engine thumping away in its shed, the Lancaster Flight Deck with associated instrumental sound effects and the 1940's Room evoking pure nostalgia combine to assail the senses and it is then easy for the little things to be overlooked. I have chosen six small objects that I think are particularly worth a second look. Perhaps when you next visit you, too, might pause and spend a moment or two considering these and their like.



This is a squirrel shaped nut cracker made of hard wood. The handle rotates and drives a screw thread that pushes a stop against a nut that has been placed in the belly of the animal. A little extra pressure then causes the nut to crack. Such fancy crackers were common place in the houses of Victorian middle classes and would have added to the ever developing idea of Christmas as a time of largesse. Interestingly, such implements were continental in origin and this supports the trend established by Prince Albert in “importing” such ideas from Middle Europe.

Although the precise

origin of the nut cracker cannot be established, it is a reasonable assumption to make that it may well have come from a local farm house or, perhaps vicarage, where money would have been available for such luxuries.



This is a desk or counter bell in the shape of a tortoise. It is made of what appears to be brass and is quite heavy. Clearly this is from a time when it would have been common place to use in order to attract attention. The size of the object and its ornamentation suggest it more likely to have been used in an office than a shop.

During the late Victorian age, tea became the national beverage of choice and with the establishment of plantations in India and Ceylon, the virtual monopoly that had been held by China began to decline in the face of the trading might of the British Empire. One of the companies that succeeded was The Mazawattee Ceylon Tea Company.



In Hindi, “maza” means pleasure or fun and “wattee” means garden. The portmanteau word was intended to convey something of the pleasure that a cup of tea might bring (not to be confused with a later somewhat racy interpretation of the pleasure garden). The caddy is in poor condition but is well used and dates from the early 20th century. The Mazawattee Company was established in 1887.

Today we accept that paper is an almost ubiquitous product and give little thought to the idea that it might once have been in short supply.

The Victorian and Edwardian school rooms relied upon a neat piece of green thinking when getting children to practice their writing and numbers – a tile that could be wiped clean and reused any number of times.



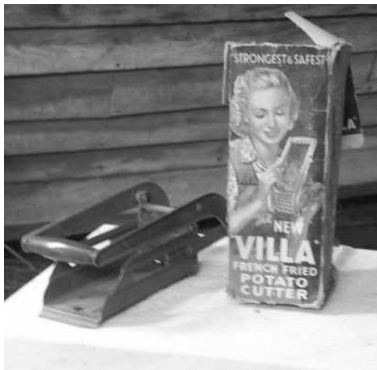
The tile was bordered by a wooden frame to help prevent breakage and to facilitate easy handling without causing cuts from sharp edges. Often, one side would be plain and the other side lined. They stayed in use longer than they should have because of the shortages occasioned by WW1 and its aftermath.

When families were bigger, the family meal needed to be prepared using appropriate sized pots. As most cooking was done over an open fire or, perhaps a kitchen range, these pots had to be substantial and were often handed down through families.



Cooking utensils today are designed ergonomically and for the average sized family. Not so this cast iron one and a half gallon saucepan. As well as being capacious, it is heavy. However, the metal construction ensures an even distribution of heat (necessary using open fires and ranges) and the size suggests a lot of mouths to feed. The old jokes about being hit with a cooking pan take on a new complexion!

Finally, to bring ourselves a little more up to date, I thought I might finish with something the 1950s housewife would find useful.



No longer were chips referred to as such – they had become French Fries and here was a kitchen work top cutter to produce the Americanised version of one of the British dietary staples. The fact that it was still in its box suggests it was not all that useful – maybe a Christmas gift that was put to the back of the cupboard and quietly forgotten?

I continue to be amazed at what is on display in various parts of the museum and hope that you might have found these everyday items from times past as fascinating as I have.

Dennis Trebble

The Old Shop



Rosemary Elliott was the last Proprietor of the old shop in Church Road Ivinghoe.

Rosemary was the daughter of **William Elliott** and **Winifred Mary (nee Green)**. The Elliott family originally came from Cheddington where they were also shop keepers.

Daniel Elliott who died in 1831 and married **Elizabeth** is the oldest member of the family I have found so far.

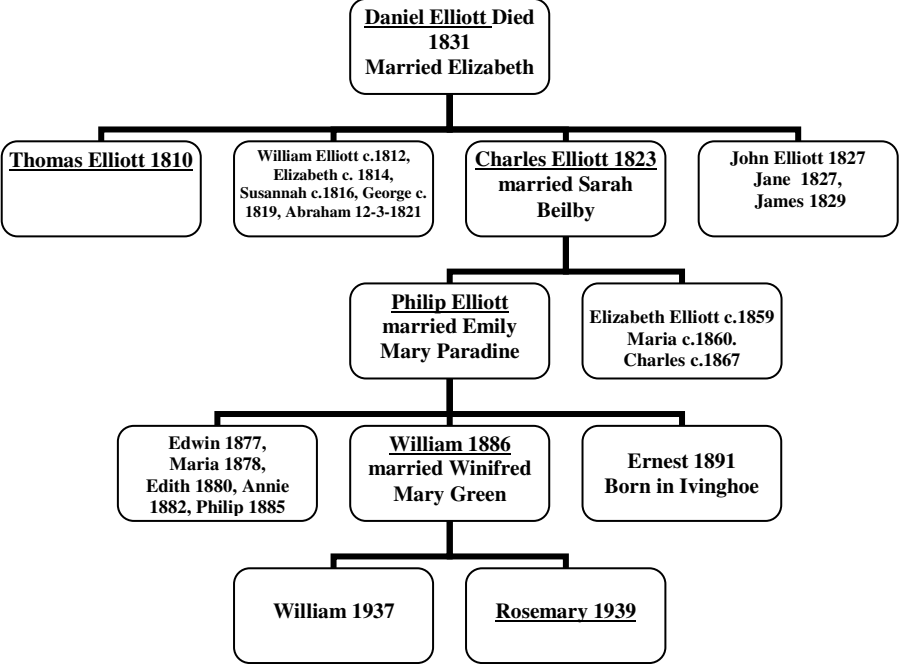
Daniel and **Elizabeth** had about 10 plus children. The eldest was **Thomas** c.1810 and their 7th child was **Charles**

c.1823. They were all born in Cheddington, Bucks. **Thomas** and **Charles** are both shown on the 1841 census in Cheddington, Bucks. **Thomas** who was 30 was a Butcher and with him was his brother **Charles** aged 15 who was also a butcher. On the census of 1851 **Charles** was still a butcher, but now living in Ivinghoe. Although no address was given, just the name of the village.

Charles Elliott married **Sarah Beilby** in 1844 in Leighton Buzzard Beds. He continued his trade as a butcher between 1861 and 1871. His address was in Ivinghoe, Back Lane. Back Lane then included what is now Ladysmith road, Vicarage Lane and Church Road. Later the shop address was High Street.

Charles and **Sarah** had four children. **Philip Elliott** was the eldest born about 1856 in Ivinghoe Bucks. The Census of 1881 shows the Shop in Ivinghoe run by **Charles**, a butcher and **Philip**, his son whose occupation was given as a “butcher and grocer”.

Philip Elliott married **Emily Mary Paradine** in 1875 in Leighton Buzzard. On the census of 1891 the shop was now run by **Philip**. The address given as 59, High Street, Ivinghoe (shop and house combined). **Philip** gives his occupation as a grocer. With the family John Chowns a servant and grocer's assistant aged 35 born in Ivinghoe, and Charlotte Paradine aged 16 a domestic servant also born in Ivinghoe and no doubt related to Emily Mary.



In 1901 on the census, **Philip Senior** now says his occupation is “draper”. His wife a draper and eldest daughter **Maria** a draper’s assistant. Sons, **William** and **Philip** say they are grocer’s assistants. So I guess they sold all sorts!

In 1911 the shop was still run by **Philip and Emily**. Thus **Philip Elliott** was a grocer, draper and butcher in the shop, 59, High Street, Ivinghoe from 1891-1911 until his son **William**, their 6th child took over.



Picture from our archives, of Elliott's Drapers shop which was on the corner of the road where the Kings Head now stands.

William Elliott was born in 1886. He had 2 children from an unknown partner, **Evelyn Joan**, born 1916 and **Sybil**, born 1919, both registered in Leighton Buzzard. He later married **Winifred Mary Green** and had two more children **William** and **Rosemary**. In the 1939 Register compiled for the war call up, William gave his occupation as butcher and grocer. He was also an A.R.P. Warden. He gave his address as High Street Ivinghoe and his Birth date as 12 11 1886.

William's daughter **Rosemary** was the last member of the Elliott family to run the Grocers shop. On the Electoral rolls of 2002, 2003 the address was: 3, Church Road, (*Ivinghoe*), Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 9EH.

Sandra Barnard...*To be continued*

Programme 2016

All meetings are held in the Meeting Room (*unless otherwise stated*) in the Pitstone Green Museum at 8.00pm. ALL VISITORS VERY WELCOME. Fees £2.00 members £3.00 visitors.

Thursday 25th August '16 * Hobbies Evening**

Our evening which showcases our members and the wide range of hobbies that interest them is always popular. If you truly have nothing to bring, then

do still 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. This year we are again including a supper with quiches and salad with a complementary glass of wine.

Please Note this meeting will be held in the Big Barn. You will need a ticket for this event; booking forms were included with our April newsletter.

Thursday 22nd September '16 * The Science Rooms at the Museum**

It has become a tradition for us to show you part of the Museum worthy of further investigation and this September it is the turn of the Science Rooms. In these rooms there are many items that would benefit from more detailed examination and we hope to help you to explore some of these gems. A finger buffet and drinks will accompany this evening; details to follow and pre-booking will be necessary.

Thursday 27th October '16 * The History of Royal Flying**

Sqd. Ldr. Graham Laurie joined the Royal Air Force as a pilot in 1964. He flew for 36 years amassing a total of 13500 hours and during the last 20 years of that career he flew members of the Royal Family and Senior government Ministers. In 1981 he was selected for The Queen's Flight and in 1995, after that unit's disbandment, he moved to No 32 (The Royal) Squadron at RAF Northolt, completing in all, over 2200 Royal Flights. He retired in Dec 2000. He will give us an illustrated talk in aid of The RAF Benevolent Fund, covering the early days of Royal Flying, the formation of The King's Flight and The Queen's Flight, up to the present day, together with some personal reminiscences.

Thursday 24th November '16 * AGM**

A Triumph of Form over Function

This talk by Dennis Trebble will trace the evolution of motorcycle design over the course of the Twentieth Century, whilst at the same time introducing the idea that the socio/economic impact of this type of transport has been far-reaching and has reflected more than just a narrow range of users. From military machines, through "bread and butter go-to-work" machines right through the Rock'n'Roll era up to modern times - a real thermometer of society! **Please note the AGM start time will be 7.30pm.**

Sue Lipscomb Programme & Minutes Secretary

Cover page

Pottery at the Museum with Ronnie Powell. On the right of the photo is Ruby Sharp.

Picture by **Bill Barnard**

Open Days 2016

Sunday **14th August**

Beryl's Bells (Handbell Ringers)

B.H. Monday **29th August**

Beryl's Bells (Handbell Ringers)

Sunday **11th September**

Sunday **9th October**

Wicket Brood Morris Men

Opening times from

11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Admission charges.

Adults £6 children £2.

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