

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



New Year 2017

Museum Report January 2017

It's very quiet at the museum at this time of year, the weather is cold and horrible and getting out again after the Christmas holidays is not easy. We have however finished the new office extension and made it more comfortable by having an industrial carpet laid on the floor. It did mean a complete clear out of everything in the office and it's going to take a few weeks to get it all back again and set up. The Elliott shop project is moving forward slowly. Working from home, Pete Farrar has made a perfect replica of the front bay window of the shop; this was probably the most difficult part of the project. There is still a massive amount of work still to do and there is no way that anything will be open to the public this year. We have had a donation of some beautifully made model carts, all in glass cases. These will go into the Model railway room and the couple of our volunteers are busy rebuilding new display benches for them. The Shepherds Hut is being refurbished inside by fitting a replica bunk bed and possibly a dummy stove and other bits and pieces a shepherd would have used. Lots of other small restoration projects, maintenance etc. are always underway and our first open day of 2017 is looking horribly close.

In the last month or so a couple of issues have come up regarding Health and Safety matters. We have at times contacted our insurers, the NFU regarding such matters. Unfortunately the person we have been dealing with over a period of at least 25 years has left and new people have taken over. The result was that the NFU has now appointed a Risk Assessment professional to visit the museum. Following his report we have to look into several Health & Safety matters, produce numerous Risk Assessment documents and restrict certain volunteer's activities unless the individual volunteers have had professional training. This they want in three months. All a bit of a nightmare and not sure at the moment where it will lead to.

Norman Groom Museum Manager

AGM 2016

The AGM was well attended with some thirty eight people being present. The meeting commenced at 7:30. There were two main items arising from the 2015 minutes, concerning the matter of the silos and current progress together with the means of emergency exit from the Cook Collection. The first had made little progress in spite of considerable effort and the second matter was reported as under discussion with our insurers and due to be discussed at the next committee meeting in January. The Chairman's Report summarised his newsletter reports over the year and the Treasurer's Report showed a healthy surplus of income over expenditure on the year together with a significant cash balance at the bank. The accounts had been scrutinised by an independent third party and were approved by the meeting.

The sub-committee reports included the last by Sue Lipscomb as Programme Secretary and the welcome news that Pete Farrar, ably supported by his wife Ronnie, had agreed to take over this task. The Publicity Report dealt with matters concerning our initiatives to be involved with local tourism as well as the use of social media to spread the word. The website and advertising were also briefly dealt with. The highlight of the year had been the presentation of a Three Counties Radio programme from the museum site and the enthusiasm of the presenter – Nick Coffey. Membership numbers were reported as 160, down from 178 last year and Bill Barnard responded to the enquiry as to why this should be so. There were no motions brought forward by the membership and the elections of committee members then took place. One of our number has resigned from the committee and there is now a vacancy, should anyone like to volunteer!

The meeting closed at 8.40.

Dennis Trebble Secretary

Moated Mansions in Bucks

Please remember that the spelling and grammar in the late 19th century may differ from that of today.

Bucks Herald, Saturday November 19th 1989, Page 2

A short distance from the Church at Little Horwood is a decayed mansion, surrounded by a moat, now the residence belonging to the Moat Farm. At Chelmechote, a hamlet about a mile and a half east of the village of Soulbury, there are traces of a moat which at one time surrounded the site of the mansion of the Lucys, who held the manor as far back as the reign of King John. The remains of this edifice have been converted into a farm house, which exhibits many features of an ecclesiastical character probably owing to the fact that the chapel belonging to the mansion erected circa 1343, forms part at the present house.

About fifty yards south-west from Stewkley Church there is a broad and deep moat in a field called Nuneham Hill, and in a meadow known as the Grove, about a mile and a quarter from the Church to the north-west, there are distinct traces of a moat and two large fish-ponds. The space inclosed is in each case about a quarter of an acre; but nothing is apparently known concerning the edifices which these moats surrounded. They may have been the sites at the mansions belonging to some of the manorial estates existing within the parish.

A moat near Tattenhoe Church, which contains a quantity of water, incloses a site of about quarter of an acre in extent, where formerly stood the ancient manor house of the Staffords who purchased the estate in 1477, and

continued in possession of it until 1716. There are remains of fish-ponds, too, in the vicinity at the moat.

At Cottesloe, a mile and a half west of Wing, within a piece of pasture land, about an acre at ground surrounded by some shallow trenches, which are supposed to have been a moat. Near it are several large ponds of water. It is from this place that the Hundred of Cottesloe obtained its designation.

In a field adjoining the Rectory garden at Mursley there is a moated inclosure which is probably the site of an ancient manor house. It appears very probable that a mansion of some importance existed at Caldecot, a hamlet of Newport Pagnell, as a portion at the moat still remains. A considerable portion of a moat, still full of water, exists at Water Eaton, near Fenny Stratford, around the site of the old Hall, once the residence at the antiquary, Browne Willis.

At Bradwell, the ancient mansion was inclosed by a moat, the remains of which are still distinctly traceable, and the modern residence is known as the Moat House. Bradwell Priory, which was converted into a mansion, and afterwards into a farmhouse, occupied a moated site.

Near an ancient farmhouse at Caldecote, about half a mile from Bow Brickhill, there are the remains of a moat which incloses half an acre of ground, probably the site of an old manor house. Traces of a deep moat and some ancient fishponds are still distinctly visible round the site of the castle of Hanslope, the seat of the Manduits in the time of King John. The spot is now partly occupied by the parish church.

The parish of North Crawley contains three moated sites. One of them surrounds an old farmhouse, and at the hamlet of Up End the moat still remains, and the fishponds belonging to it may be distinctly traced; but there are now no remains of the mansion which at one time occupied a position within the inclosed space.

At East End, a little over a mile from the church, stands at a little distance from the high road the interesting old manor house, surrounded by a moat which is always full of water. The mansion is constructed of stone, and substantially built, the outer walls being two and a half feet in thickness, and with its quaint old gables it presents a very picturesque appearance when viewed from the front. The site inclosed within the fosse is about an acre in extent.

On the farm attached to Thick Thorn Lodge, at Chicheley, there are distinct traces of a moat, of which nothing certain appears to be known; but plain

traces of fishponds remain, which indicate that a mansion formerly existed there. It is in all probability the site of the capital mansion purchased by Sir William Chester from Lady Mansel about the middle of the 16th century. The Chesters still hold the Chicheley estate, their seat being the handsome mansion known as Chicheley Hall.

Bucks Herald, Saturday November 26th 1898, Page 7

Part of the ancient moat still exists which formerly surrounded the site of the mansion of Oakley, and near the Rectory House of Hanslope there are distinct traces of a moat. The old manor house at Hardmead stood north-west of the church; but was demolished about sixty years ago. Traces of the moat remain, and the fish-ponds are still visible.

The manor house at Haversham was partly taken down in 1792. The portion left standing is ancient and built of stone, and in its vicinity are distinct traces of a moat and some fish-ponds. In a field west of the church at Milton Keynes are the remains of a moat and traces of fish-ponds, indicating probably the site of the mansion of the ancient lords of the manor. The site of the Augustinian Priory of Ravenstone is a short distance west ward from the church, and on the descent of the hill on which the church stands there is a moated site, in which was formerly a large fish-pond, since filled up, and a well of clear water.

Within the parish of Shenley there are several of these moated inclosures; but whether they are all residential sites or not is a doubtful point. The village lies near the line of the Roman military road called Watling-street, and some of the ditches may have been defensive works connected with the station at or near Fenny Stratford. There are some extensive earthworks of a quadrilateral form, one side of which was levelled for the convenience of the old manor house, which stood within the encampment, and was pulled down by Matthew Knapp, Esq., lord of the manor, in 1774. Close to these earthworks is a small wooded eminence, surrounded by a moat full of water. The Rev. P.Knapp, who succeeded his brother, the above named Matthew, erected a little rustic cottage on this small wooded island, made walks through the wood, and erected a drawbridge across the narrowest part of the moat.

At the end of Shenley Wood is another moated situation, occupied as a farmhouse, which was visible from the mount before the wood was planted, and this, in turn, was visible from a similar position at Tattenhoe, mentioned last week; and then in a line with these, there is another small moated site adjoining Bletchley field. All these positions were evidently connected with each other, and many have been used as a defensive protection for that part of the military road, as well as individually a security for the residences standing within them.

At Monks Risborough, a short distance westward from the Church, in a field adjoining the Place Farm, is an ancient Dove House. It is square, built of stone, with an arched entrance, and near it are distinct traces of a moat and a fish-pond. According to local tradition, this is the site of a Benedictine Cell subject of Christ Church, Canterbury; but no evidence of its existence here is forthcoming, and it is more reasonable to suppose that a mansion of some importance stood here in ancient times.

THE BUCKS HERALD, FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 1949

“HERALD” SKETCH BOOK



Dovecot on Mr. W. H. Hitchcocks' Farm at Monks Risborough. It is 16th century, and a well preserved example of these ancient buildings. But one wall was re-built in 1930, after it collapsed in severe weather.

The sketch is by Frank Basil Purssell a well known artist and musician from Wendover. He did a number of sketches and cartoons for the Bucks Herald in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

In the adjoining parish of Princes Risborough is situated one of the most interesting moated sites in the county. The manor was one of the royal demesnes, and the first part of the name is supposed to have been derived from its association with Edward the Black Prince, who is said to have had a palace here. The site of this royal residence is known as the Mount, and lies westward of the church. It was inclosed by a broad and deep moat, which is still easily traceable. No vestiges of the palace now remain above ground; but the inequalities of the surface of the ground prove the existence of foundations and remnants of the old edifice, now covered with mould and overgrown with grass. The spot is well worth a careful survey.

Near the old Church of Stoke Mandeville there are several moated sites and fish-ponds, which can be traced with very little trouble. Either a large mansion or some religious house existed here in former times. Foundations of buildings have been discovered in the meadow adjacent to the churchyard. At All End, over a mile from the church, there is a farm residence surrounded by a moat, the course of which is nearly obliterated. This may have been the site of one of the ancient manor houses. At Chearsley Green, a short distance from the Parish Church is an interesting house, partly ancient and partly modern. The northern side of the moat remains, and is filled with water containing fish.

Bill Barnard (and SIGMA).

To be continued

Here is another sketch by F.B.Pursell published in the
Bucks Herald in 1947

“Herald” Sketch Book



IVINGHOE, in a quiet corner of Bucks, retains much architectural charm.

The Old Shop (continued)

Welcome to Rosemary Elliot's Bicycle Part 2

My comment in part 1 that "work is proceeding well now" proved to be somewhat optimistic. Jobs that should take little time ended up being very frustrating.

For example, several bearings needed re-greasing - a straightforward job you would think and you would be correct. At least, it would have been had it not been for the ball bearings which are small and have an annoying tendency to leap from your hands, roll off the bench and miraculously disappear from view, wasting time trying to find them.



A more major frustration surrounded the location of the rear brake pads. To be effective they must of course come into contact with the rear wheels but because of their design they have to be installed after the wheel and chain have been fitted. Having carefully rebuilt and installed them it became clear that they were too far away from the wheel thus rendering them useless, which seemed odd. A cup of tea and time to reflect suggested the problem might be down to a brake part component needed to replace the original. This was a period part and was said to be the same size as the original but it turned out to be slightly longer which is what caused the brake pads to be further away from the wheel.

There was a simple solution though - move the wheel back a bit in the frame to get the correct gap between brake pad and wheel. As usual the simple way didn't work, the chain wasn't long enough. Another solution for that too though - insert two new links in the chain, move the wheel back a bit further and bingo - everything is OK. Except it wasn't. Chain now too long so take a link out! Now things really are OK, chain the right tension and brakes working fine. All this entailed removing and re-assembling brake pads, chain, and rear wheel a good few times before all was well.

All this is pretty typical of trying to conserve museum artefacts and sticking to our policy of keeping things original as far as we can. Buying new modern components would be easier and avoid much of the frustration BUT it would give less satisfaction to the conservator and take away much of the originality,

Despite the frustrations, the bike is now back in one piece and back in the museum. The only job left to do (I think) is to get the lighting to work. I need Norman's help for that. It is resplendent in a new coat of dark green paint and a few decals to brighten it up. To help prevent rust, the wheels have been primed and painted (which is a lot cheaper than re-chroming) It still has dents and blemishes so if you see it on your next visit don't expect it to look like a brand new bike.

Before



After



Brian Davis

Membership 2016-17

We end the 2016-17 season with 160 members, and it is time to look forward to 2017-18. This starts on 1st April 2017. The next newsletter will be published after this date, and will contain membership renewal information.

You will be able to renew your membership on the Easter Bank Holiday Monday Open Day, which is, of course, on the 17th April 2017. Please come and find me in the Meeting Room.

Bill Barnard Membership Secretary

Note

We have sadly lost two of our long standing members.

George Crutcher - 30 September 1945 - 15 October 2016

Leslie Laing - 4 November 1933 - 27 December 2016

A detailed report will be in our April Newsletter.

Programme 2017

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 26th January '17

David Butler - "Cordite, Castrol R & the 2012 Olympics"

David, a local lad who has had an amazing life, lived to the full, having been severely injured in 1955 at the age of 11, when a live shell left on Dunstable Downs in WW 2 exploded when he clumsily dropped it! He went on to become the youngest subject of the Eamon Andrews Show "This is your life" at the age of only 17.

He had a passion for motor racing which he fulfilled, despite his disabilities and apologises for spending his working life as a chartered accountant. He has been a leading light in many organisations particularly in the area of disabilities and it was through this that he came to carry the Olympic torch in it's journey through his home town of Hemel Hempstead and subsequently took part in the opening ceremony.

Come along for an amusing and fascinating evening, detailing his life in the aftermath of explosives testing as described last year, in our talk about Winston Churchill's Toy Shop.

Thursday 23rd February '17

Infantry Training at Halton in World War One

Francis Hanford, who works at the Trenchard Museum at RAF Halton, will be talking about the training of Kitchener's volunteers on Alfred's Estate.

Thursday 23rd March

Hugh Garrod - SIR NIGEL LORING - 1315-1386

One of Dunstable's most colourful but lesser known characters, a knight and Chamberlain to Edward the Black Prince in the middle ages. Born at Chalgrave Manor, he fought and distinguished himself in many important battles in the Hundred Years War, for which he was knighted at the age of 25.

His family owned much of Dunstable and surrounding villages and he was a key player in the founding of the Order of the Garter. His life was portrayed in two books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle so, come and discover more about this fascinating part of our local history, given by Hugh Garrod.

Thursday 27th April

Colin Oakes - London in the Blitz

The popular Colin Oakes returns with an insight into what life was like in London during the Blitz. Come and learn what actually happened and how Londoners dealt with the ever present threat of the bombers during this dreadful part of World War Two.

Pete Farrar Publicity and Programme Secretary

Cover page *Picture by Rob Barber*

John Barber and his dog Lucy on his steam car 'Lily' on the September 2016 open day.

Open Days 2017

Easter Monday **17th April**
Early Spring B.H. Monday **1st May**
Spring B.H. Monday **29th May**
Sunday **11th June**
Sunday **9th July**
Sunday **13th August**
B.H. Monday **28th August**
Sunday **10th September**
Sunday **8th October**
Wicket Brood

Opening times from
11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
Admission charges.
Adults £6 children £2.

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