

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



Spring 2017

MUSEUM REPORT APRIL 2017

As part of our accreditation application and even previously with our registration application we were required to produce a Forward Plan. This contains our mission statement, management structure and other information regarding the running of the museum. On the face of it, it is a sensible document and keeps us on the right track. Where it falls down however is in the title 'Forward Plan'. In many organisations changes are often relatively slow and one can indeed plan ahead, at least for one to two years. Not so at the museum. Virtually every artefact we have and those that still arrive are donated. Many we have to reject and some are so desirable that we do accept them. In the past twelve months or so we have had several items that have completely changed the direction in which we thought we had planned. At least two rooms have had major changes, other additional storage arrears are under consideration and a completely new room is under construction. The major project, and a long term one, is the Elliott Shop rebuild. We are making progress. The front window, a major part of the project and the front door is complete and erected in a temporary mode for visitors to see. Some work on the interior is underway but it will be another twelve months before the structure is complete and then follows the work of stocking the shop.

The model railway room is another location where there has been an unplanned change. We had a number of model carts offered to us. They were beautifully made and in glass cases - something we could not refuse. At almost the same time another volunteer joined us and offered us another rather nice railway layout. This new layout is just about complete, the model carts have been set up and ready for the open day.



Models Picture Bill Barnard

We now have a second loco for the original Gauge 1 layout. This is a main line BR loco type 9F, purchased second hand with no control gear which has since been fitted with a speed controller and radio control. The only remaining problem is finding enough helpers to run everything.

A further donation was a large box of magic lantern slides including hand-made and painted ones dating from the late 1800's to mass produced dating from the 1930's. The later ones tell stories in a sequence of twelve boxed slides. All were in a very poor condition when received, involving a lot of

restoration work and some are now on display in the Village Life Room. Before the donation the room was nearing its final refurbishment but the slide donation changed plans. A wall-mounted light box shows two coloured sets of slides and underneath a couple of magic lanterns on a shelf, both relocated from the Science Room. It is planned to have at least one of these working although time to open day is very short. The light box proved to be quite impressive, so much so that we are building a light bench with an oval top, lit from underneath and showing many more slides from the collection.

These are just a few new projects but much other work has been carried out to get ready for the new season. Three of our volunteers spent a cold winter outside, but undercover, getting our line shafting functioning. Many items of farm machinery can now be driven. Who knows, one day we may be able to use the mat making machine, the oat crusher and some others.

The new office is just about complete with the last item to go in, another work bench. Little work could be carried on the Colin Cook Collection throughout the closed season as the contents of the old office were stored in the loft. It has had a spring clean and is now ready for the visitors. More and more time is being spent on restoration of some of our artefacts and refurbishing existing displays.

All the new road signs have been made and ready to go out, leaflets have been printed, so we now await an influx of customers.

We have several years of planned existing work ahead and several possible new projects on the horizon, all we need is more time, more people and more space; quite a task in itself!

Norman Groom Museum Manager

GEORGE CRUTCHER 30.09.1945-15.10.2016

In our last newsletter we reported the sad loss of long time member George Crutcher. We now include a longer obituary.

George was born in Portsmouth in 1945 and attended Portsmouth Grammar School. He retained connections with the city throughout his life. On leaving school he joined George Wimpey as a trainee quantity surveyor at their offices in Hammersmith but soon found this was not for him. However, his work brought him into contact with Town Planning which he thought would be much more interesting and he was successful in obtaining a traineeship with the then Greater London Council. George gained his professional qualification at The Brixton School of Building to become a Member of The Royal Town Planning Institute, gaining the highest marks in the country in his final examination.

He continued working for the GLC for a number of years, at a time of great change in the Capital before moving to Buckinghamshire County Council in 1972, working on the County Structure Plan and the early days of Milton Keynes New City.

It was around this time that he and Lesley joined Pitstone Local History Society (Pitstone Green Farm Museum). By then he was developing an interest and subsequent passion for industrial archaeology and local history and studied the subject in depth. He gave talks to the Society on various occasions, including the History of Brewing, Industry in the Chilterns, the History of Transport and Canals, The Industrial Revolution and more. He became a tutor for the WEA and was much in demand as a speaker. In addition he was a member of Watford Industrial History Society, The Brewery History Society and The Association for Industrial Archaeology.

For some years he volunteered at the work parties at the Museum, working alongside Bob Morgan, David Goseltine and Tom Owen. George was part of the group which dismantled the Gas Engine from Grace's, Corn Merchants, Akeman Street, Tring for transport to Pitstone and also Mr Walton's Brushworks from Leighton Buzzard. He and his wife Lesley also helped with refreshments in the Catering area. When he was 65 Lesley arranged a surprise birthday party, held in the Big Barn which was suitably decorated and guests were able to look around the Museum. A memorable evening.

George moved to South Bedfordshire District Council in 1975 as Development Plans Manager until his retirement in 2006. However with George there was no such thing as retirement and he set up his own Planning Consultancy and was in great demand.

Outside work he was a keen cricketer, cyclist, and volunteer for the local Wildlife Trust, School Governor and champion of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

George never sat still; he enjoyed life to the full and was generous with his time and encouragement of others. Always cheerful and with a mischievous sense of humour he charmed everyone he met. He will be sadly missed.

LESLIE LAING – 1933 – 2016

Les was born on the 4 November 1933 in Burnt Oak; he was the youngest of nine children. When war broke out his older brothers were off fighting in the war so he was brought up with his sisters. He had one regret in life that his father died before he became a man.

Living in an Anderson Shelter at the bottom of the Garden and later in Belsize Park Underground Station was an exciting time, and in the dark days

of war during the Dunkirk evacuation he was made to sing 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' at school, he asked for this hymn to be played at his funeral.

When he left school he became a plumbers apprentice but his mother insisted that he got a proper job, so he followed his desire to see the world and joined the Merchant Navy where he served on many Cruise ships as a silver service waiter. Then he was called up for National Service and he went into the RAF serving in the Canal Zone and Malta where he made many lifelong friends. He left the RAF and returned to civvy-street where he enrolled at a College for Further Education and studied Electronic Engineering and later worked for Elliot Automation (GEC) working on Air Defence systems around Britain and Europe.

GEC was good to him in many ways as this is where he met Isabel the love of his life. They married in 1970 and at that point he said his life was revitalised.

Their life together was a wonderful journey of happiness and they decided to buy a village shop where they could work together, hence the move to Vicarage Lane, Ivinghoe in 1975. A decision they never regretted.

With his love of Football he soon made lots of new friends and became an integral part of Ivinghoe & Pitstone FC you could say he was a groupie!

After he retired from the shop he pursued his interests in Family History and Local History, he undertook the task of recording the Births, Deaths and Marriages and photographing all the graves across the Parish. This interest extended outside of the village with people contacting him from all over the World seeking information about relatives who had originated in the Ivinghoe & Pitstone area. Les was a member of the Pitstone Local History Society, later to be renamed Pitstone & Ivinghoe Museum Society.

Following his Heart attack he became involved with the Heart Support Group at Stoke Mandeville and made many good friends, He was also co-opted onto the Hospital Patient Committee and attended meetings for a number of years representing the views of the General Public.

Latterly he joined the British Legion and always enjoyed his time in their company. Over the last 42 years Les immersed himself into a rural way of life, enjoying the company of its people in a village that he loved.

David Whittaker April 2017

THE IVINGHOE OLD BREWERY TENNIS CLUB

You may be aware that the Village Life room at the museum has been undergoing refurbishment during the closed season. One of the items that came out of a glass case that had been sealed for at least thirty years was an

accounts book of The Ivinghoe Old Brewery Tennis Club. It covers the years from 1929 to 1938 and gives a snapshot of such clubs at the time. I had to rely upon my early schooling of pounds, shillings and pence to understand the accounts and hope that this summary might be of interest.

The 1930s was a decade that began on the back of the Wall Street Crash of 1929, which helped precipitate the start of the Depression years in the UK, as available investment in industry ground to a halt. At such a time it would seem disingenuous to begin a club that was expensive to join, that required expensive kit to participate in and which was very public in its presence. Yet in 1929, it was agreed to begin a tennis club in Ivinghoe and the first committee drew up a list of potential people to invite to join. Of the fifty five on the list, twenty five accepted and agreed to pay the yearly subscription of one guinea. This sum of twenty one shillings represented a significant proportion of the average local wage of £2/18/9 per week at the time. It is clear, then, that only those with a significantly comfortable income would be considered for membership.

The high cost of membership to begin with was evidently designed to set up a working fund, as by 1932, this had fallen to 10/6 (half a guinea) and then rose in 1933 to 12/6, to settle at 15/- from 1934 onward. The initial enthusiasm waned rapidly, with membership falling to eighteen in 1930, fifteen in 1932 and, with fluctuations, to seven in 1937, finishing at ten in 1939. The aim of the club was to be financially self-sufficient, with the main expenditures going on mowing, rolling and netting. In the early years, as courts were established, the expenditure was high. For example, in 1930, it was £22/19/5 against an income of £19/3/0. As the decade wore on, it settled at eleven to fourteen pounds per year.

To supplement income, a Christmas draw was held in 1931, which yielded £1/12/6, and a Christmas dance in 1932, which gave a £1/0/0 return. A number of familiar family names recur during the time period, such as Pratt, Seabrook, Buckmaster, Leach and Kew in the membership lists and Halsey, Elliott and Grace amongst the groundsmen and mower repairs. The income of the club, at around fifteen pounds a year, attracted the attention of the taxman. In 1931, after three years of existence, they were charged £2/6/9 income tax, which then oscillated around £1 per year until 1936/7 when it dropped to around eighteen shillings, giving a tax rate of 10% or so.

I have no information as to the location of the courts, though the link with the brewery is evident in the name of the club. The HQ is given as The Kings Head and beyond the rules pertaining to membership and visitors, the only other rule it was felt necessary to put in black and white was "No unleashed dogs shall be allowed on the courts". It was an accepted tenet of society that

people would behave appropriately and with good sportsmanship. With the onset of the Autumn of 1939, further records ceased.

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 December 3rd 1898, Page 7

Before continuing my notes this week upon the above subject, I desire to thank the contributor to the “North Bucks” column for the particulars supplied in reference to the Moat Farm at Little Horwood. They were few, but very welcome. May I again remind my readers, especially those who take an intelligent interest in these kind of subjects, that I shall be extremely glad to receive even the proverbial “smallest donation” relative to this matter, either by the way of amplification or correction. There are many little tit-bits of local or personal history connected with these relics of ancient and mediaeval times known to people living on the spot, that would be worthy of being put on record, if only those conversant with the facts would supply the information. I am not aware of any previous attempt having been made to supply a connected account of these interesting old sites, and as a personal visit to all of them is out of the question, perhaps some of my very kind friends in different parts of the county will follow the example quoted above.

At East Claydon, northwards from the church, there is a spot upon which in all probability existed, in former times, a moated mansion. A great part of the moat has become obliterated, but remains of the ditch still exist on the north side. It has been conjectured that here stood the Manor House of the Lees—the Morton branch—who held the estate in the 16th century. There is a remnant of the house still standing. The original structure must have been of an imposing character, for, according to Lipscomb, it had “numerous gables, heavy stacks of chimneys, mullioned windows, and piers surmounted with stone balls”; and he adds that it was standing entire within living memory.

At Hogshaw there is an old moat near the site of the demolished parish church. At the hamlet of Fulbrook the moat can still be traced that surrounded the site of the mansion belonging to the Throckmortons and Winwoods, since converted into a farm-house, which yet retains some evidences of its departed greatness.

At Horsendon, a portion of the moat of the original mansion is still perfect. The present house was built on the site in 1810. A short distance eastwards of Hulcott church there is a moated inclosure, within which foundations of buildings have been discovered; but no particulars appear to be known respecting the mansion which, there is no doubt, at one time stood here. It is a

noticeable feature connected with these old sites, that a large number of them are found in close proximity to the church.

Another instance of this, which may be cited, is found at Saunderton, where extensive remains of a broad, deep moat containing water still exist on the south side of St. Mary's church, and close to the Church farm occupied by Mr. Stratfold Read. That a mansion of some importance formerly stood here cannot be doubted, and the lines of the foundations are easily to be traced. In damp weather, when the turf is soft, they can be felt with a walking-stick by thrusting it through the superincumbent mould. In olden days there were two distinct manors in this parish, and two churches; upon the spot to which I am now referring, the manor house of Saunderton St. Mary probably stood. The moat is far from being perfect, but from the remnants still existing a pretty accurate idea can be formed of what it was like before some portions of the ditches were destroyed.

In Lower Chapel field, near Evershaw, within the parish of Biddlesden, there are traces of a moat, and within the inclosed space foundations of a mansion have been found a little below the surface. This was the site of the manor house of a family deriving their name from the hamlet.

Apsley House, in Ellesborough, occupies the site of the mansion belonging to the reputed manor of Apsley lying partly in that parish and partly in Little Kimble. It is surrounded by a moat nearly perfect, and always full of water. Aston Bernard is a hamlet belonging to Dinton, situated about two miles from the parish church. Here is the site of a moated mansion of the Bernards and Molins, who possessed the estate in the 14th and 15th centuries. The present farmhouse stands a short distance from this spot, and in its construction some of the timbers from the old mansion were used. In 1409 William de Molins held this estate by the service of feeding the King's falcons and presenting to the sovereign annually one sparrow-hawk. It is now one of the largest dairy farms in Bucks.

The ancient mansion, which stood on the site of the Rectory House of Woughton-on-the-Green, appears to have been surrounded by a moat; and at Cheddington, in a field called the Home Close, there is a deep moat, accompanied by fish ponds, inclosing the site of an old mansion of which nothing is apparently known.

The site of the mansion of the Cheynes, who held the manor of Drayton Beauchamp for three centuries down to 1728, can still be traced by the moated inclosure and fish ponds. The house was demolished in 1760.

Bill Barnard (and SIGMA).

To be continued

THE OLD SHOP (continued)

Here is another article about the Elliott's Shop.

THE VILLAGE SHOP – IVINGHOE



Napoleon once called us a nation of shopkeepers, he was probably right but if you think about it, when did shops first appear? Originally, the main form of retail outlet would have been the market stall. Modern society seems to think that farmers markets are the latest thing but in fact they were the origin of shopping. Farmers and artisans making everything from barrels to baskets, would have met at a fixed time, in what became the market square, to hawk their produce. It wasn't until the late 1500s that fixed, permanent buildings started to be used as what we now know as shops. The word *shop* seems to be derived from old European terms meaning a booth, lean to, or place of work or trade. By the late 1600s there were over 40,000 shops in Britain.

Sometime in the mid 1800s a shop was opened in the high street in Ivinghoe, opposite the church, round the corner from The Kings Head. The Elliott family ran this shop until sometime around 2000, when it finally closed to the public. Rosemary Elliott, the lady known to everyone as Jane, continued to occupy the premises until sadly, in 2016 she died. When sorting out her effects, a note was discovered, asking that the remaining contents and the fixtures and fittings of the old shop should be preserved at Pitstone Green Museum for future generations to appreciate. To these ends, the volunteers at the museum have stripped out the interior, carefully photographed and measured everything, inside and out and have started to build a replica of the old shop on the site of the Museum at Pitstone Green. We are a bit short of

suitable space, but have found a site that should do justice to this wonderful, unique piece of local history.

The project will take a while but in the meantime, pop along to the museum on one of our open days, to see how we are getting on with this and many other projects we have in hand. If anyone has any photos, articles, objects or anecdotes relating to the old shop please drop them in on an open day or a Tuesday or Thursday when the volunteers are on site.

Pitstone Green Museum opens again on Easter Monday and is then open on Bank Holiday Mondays and the second Sunday of each month from June until October. If you would like to arrange a visit at some other time or would like to get involved in any way, get in contact via the website.

www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk

Pete Farrar Publicity and Programme Secretary

MEMBERSHIP 2017

It's the start of a new season, so time to renew your membership to PIMS. Please complete the form enclosed with this newsletter and post it with your cheque, to the Museum address. You can also find me in the meeting room on our Open Days.

Bill Barnard Membership Secretary

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 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.

Thursday 25th May

Bill Davies - On and Off the Footplate

The subject of trains is always a popular one so, come and hear the anecdotes of a man who spent 42 years of his working life driving and working with trains of all shapes and sizes.

Thursday 22nd June

Roger Moorhouse - Berlin in WW2

Roger lives right next door to the museum and is a professional historian and has written many history books. As a follow on from the London Blitz come and hear what it was like in the German capital. His book "Berlin at War" gives an insight into the life of ordinary Germans as it became more obvious that they were losing the war.

Thursday 27th July

Stephen Hearn - Antiques Evening

Our local celebrity antiques expert and keen supporter of the museum has kindly agreed to pay us a visit again, to assess and value our own personal family heirlooms. As usual we have cheese and wine included, so book early to avoid disappointment. A booking form is enclosed with this newsletter

Thursday 24th August

This is free at the moment. We are still considering our options for this evening. Further information will be in the next Newsletter.

Pete Farrar

HELP

YOUR MUSEUM NEEDS YOU!

PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT

If, as I am, you are passionate about our fantastic museum and you are happy using the phone and sending emails then you could be very useful in helping out with publicity. Ronnie and I try our best at getting coverage for the museum in as many outlets as we can but from past experiences we run out of steam as the season progresses and we do not do as much as we could to get articles printed in local publications. If you have a few hours spare each month, why not give us a hand. It can all be done from home and involves contacting the local press, adjusting entries on various websites, and if possible keeping up with Facebook, twitter etc. If you prefer we can write the articles and prepare the website info but we do really need some help to allow us to do the jobs we are better suited for, we both like working on keeping the site looking fantastic and mother nature will not wait while we play on our computers.

Pete Farrar Publicity and Programme Secretary

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Bucks Family History Society Open day.

Saturday 29th July 2017 10.00am – 4.00 pm.

The Grange School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury. HP2 7NH

We will once again be hosting a table at this venue for Pitstone Green Museum.

Sandra and Bill Barnard

STOP PRESS

Easter Monday Open Day- Best ever with 656 visitors, 534 adults and 122 children.

COVER PAGE

Dancers at the Museum Open Day 14th September 2014

Picture Bill Barnard

Open Days 2017

Easter Monday **17th April**

New Moon Morris

Early Spring B.H. Monday **1st May**

Whitchurch Morris Men

Spring B.H. Monday **29th May**

Sunday **11th June**

Sunday **9th July**

Tappalachian Dancers

Sunday **13th August**

Haddenham Bells (Bell Ringers)

B.H. Monday **28th August**

Haddenham Bells (Bell Ringers)

Sunday **10th September**

Sunday **8th October**

Wicket Brood Morris

Opening times from

11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Admission charges.

Adults £6 children £2.

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Registered Charity No 273931