

# Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



## Summer 2017

## **MUSEUM REPORT July 2017**

We are now just over half way through the open season and so far we have had an exceptional year. We have broken several records on attendance and income and assuming that the weather holds on the last four open days we may have our best ever year in 2017.

The Easter Monday Open Day was one of these records and we did hold a visitor survey during the day. The survey was carried out by Elizabeth Paul (Exeter University student on placement) and produced some interesting results.

Over three quarters of our visitors came within a five mile radius of the museum with a large proportion having been to previous open days or were recommended by friends. The next largest attendance was attributed to our road signs. Vintage cars, Model trains, variety of exhibits, Tractor rides and Molly the working Clydesdale Horse being the most popular attractions in that order. Satisfaction level was high, some ninety percent and comments were:-

Uniqueness should be preserved; Important to keep it going, Very impressive, Very laid back and friendly. When asked about any improvement we could make, the comments were: - more catering, more seating and better signage.

The only downside of the July Open Day came when two families gained access without paying. This would have gone unnoticed apart from a teenager that was making a nuisance of himself. We had to ask the people concerned to leave the premises and in order to get the teenager to leave we contacted the local Community Police Officer. We are now looking at ways of improving security in general, as times are changing and we have to keep abreast of the situation.

Volunteer projects continue at a steady pace, lots of our engines and farm machinery are now working on open days. The Elliott shop project is progressing but we still have another twelve months of work to do until the shop is complete, and then follows the task of filling all the shelves with suitable stock. These will have to be replicas, copied from 'one off' originals as the quantities needed will be considerable.

Storage space at the museum always has been, and probably always will be a problem. We have ideas in hand to provide additional storage space but another general rubbish skip would help.

We still have items offered to us for the Museum; the majority being farming related items that we already have. We therefore sometimes have to decline the offer. However items do turn up that are well worth accepting as either they are better than an artefact that we already have or something new to us.

One item we have accepted is a Governess Cart. A small cart that was pulled by a pony. It does need quite a bit of loving care and attention but it was used in 2016, so it is quite sound.

We still need more help at the museum, the ground work is quite demanding and other skills like carpentry, in depth knowledge of computers and knowledge of basic electrical/electronics would be a great asset. Do come along on a Tuesday or Thursday if you could spare an hour or two.

**Norman Groom Museum Manager**

### **MOATED MANSIONS IN BUCKS**

**Final part.**

*Please remember that the spelling and grammar in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century may differ from that of today.*

#### **Bucks Herald, Saturday December 24<sup>th</sup> 1898, page 6**

The hamlet of Cippenham, in the parish of Burnham, is probably the only place in the county which possesses a moated site whereon once existed a palace actually occupied by the royal family. The one at Risborough belonged to the Black Prince; but there is no evidence that the King himself ever resided there. The Manor of Cippenham was part of the ancient demesnes of the Crown, and, there was a royal residence of the Kings of Mercia, and also of the Norman and early Plantagenet sovereigns down to Henry III, in whose reign it was conferred upon Burnham Abbey, which was founded in 1265 by Richard, King of the Romans and Earl of Cornwall, brother to Henry III. It is very probable that the royal founder occupied the palace at Cippenham, as the foundation charter was dated from that place. It is situated near the Thames, about a couple of miles south from Burnham, and in the domestic expenses of Edward II there occurs an entry of “vij de pade to seven watermen for bringing the Kynge in a skoot or barge to Cyppenham from Shene, where the Lady la Despensar resided.”

The Grove Farm within the parish of Chesham was anciently a manorial estate which for many generations belonged to the opulent family of

Cheyne, who had a moated seat here, their capital mansion in this part of the country having been at Chenies. The house at Grove appears to have been a place of considerable strength, and part of the great hall was standing in 1750. There was a chapel adjoining the mansion similar to the one at Hundridge, for the accommodation of the family, owing to the distance of the place from the Parish Church.

Grove now belongs to Mr. W. Lowndes, of The Bury, Chesham. In the adjacent parish of Hawridge, the old Manor House, now a farm residence, occupies the site of the ancient mansion known as Hawridge Court, and stands within a moated inclosure, the vallum being nearly perfect. Some interesting remains have been found on this spot at various times.

**Bucks Herald, Saturday January 14<sup>th</sup> 1899, Page 7**

Quarrendon was a royal residence as early as the beginning of the 7th century, and it is possible that the palace of the Mercian Princes occupied the same site as the Manor House did in subsequent ages. In the reign of Elizabeth the Manor was in the possession of the celebrated Sir Henry Lee, the Queen's Champion. He made Quarrendon his chief seat and erected there a grand Mansion, in which he lived in great splendour. Irregularities in the surface of the ground and the remains of the moat by which was it surrounded still exist to indicate where the house once stood. In August, 1592, the Queen spent two days at Sir Henry's Mansion, where she was entertained with great splendour and magnificence. The ancient seat of the Lees, which stood on the south side of the Church, was pulled down in the early part of last century.

Another famous site is that which lies to the left of the high road as it passes through Whitchurch on its way from Aylesbury to Winslow. This spot is still known as Bolebec Castle, which was founded by Hugh de Bolebec soon after the Norman Conquest. There are at present no vestiges of walls or other buildings; but the high rampart, with the remains of several large mounds, indicate very accurately where the Castle formerly stood, and are objects of great curiosity. Traces of the moat are still visible, and some water remaining on the west side of the site is known as the Weir Pond, and down to the end of the last century a drawbridge led over the stream into Weir Lane close by. The castle was occupied by the De Veres, Earls of Oxford, to whom it passed by a female heir from the De Bolebecs. After having remained for some time in a ruinous state, the Castle was demolished at the end of the Civil War of the 17th century. Some of the stone houses and walls for which the village is noted were, no doubt, erected out of remains of this once famous moated Castle.

**Bucks Herald, Saturday February 18<sup>th</sup> 1899, Page 7**

At Oakley, a large, plainly-built edifice of brick occupies the site of the ancient manor house of the Fitz-Neales and Ingletons. It is situated opposite the church, on its west side, and the pleasure grounds at the back are extensive and tastefully laid out. It was formerly moated all round, but only a portion of the moat remains.

Ditton is a manor belonging to Stoke Poges. Here Sir John de Molyns had a castellated mansion in the time of Edward III. He married the heiress of Robert Poges, from whom the distinguishing part of the name of the parish is derived. De Molyns obtained from the king a licence to embattle and fortify both his houses — the capital mansion near Stoke Church, and the other one at Ditton. It was probably at that period when the moat which still remains was constructed round his house at Ditton. On its site Sir Ralph Winwood, Secretary of State to James I., erected a noble mansion which was destroyed by fire in 1812. In the next year it was rebuilt by Elizabeth, Duchess of Buccleuch. The estate had been bequeathed to her by her uncle, Lord Beaulieu, husband of the daughter and heiress of John Duke of Montagu, to whose family the property passed by marriage from the Winwoods. Here George Duke of Montagu resided in a style of great hospitality; and during the period of his occupancy of the mansion, Ditton was the rendezvous of the philosophic, the witty, and the wise. The mansion still exhibits some signs of antiquity, particularly the old tower. Several members of the Montagu family are interred in the south-west part of the churchyard, just beyond "that yew-tree's shade" mentioned in Gray's "Elegy."

Another moated mansion belonging to the Winwoods existed at Denham, a hamlet in Quanton parish. In the 13th century this was the seat of the Mallet family, and was considered the principal mansion of the ancient lords of the place. After the death of Anne, widow of Richard Winwood, Esq., the mansion which had been erected on the site of the original manor-house was partly demolished; and about the beginning of last century (1718) the remaining buildings were converted into a farm-house. The whole site, about an acre in extent, is surrounded by a deep moat, the water of which is supplied by springs from the adjacent hills. There was a drawbridge over the moat near where the old lodge or gateway stood.

Another ancient seat in Quanton parish which appears to have been moated is Doddershall House, the seat of the Craufords and Pigotts. This was one of the finest seats in the County, and although the alterations which have at various times been made have left but little of its original

style and appearance, the house is still an interesting specimen of Domestic Gothic. In a field belonging to one of the farms in this hamlet is a circular mound about 110 yards in circumference and 12 feet in height, surrounded by a moat, the water of which is clear and bright.

At Marsworth there is the square-moated site of the manor-house of the Wests, who owned a third part of the manor in the 16th century. The moat, which is broad and deep and contains fish, incloses an area of about an acre of ground, but not a vestige of the mansion is visible. On another moated site near the village probably stood the mansion of the Seares, who were resident there for above three centuries, during which time there were sixteen generations, the owners of the estate bearing alternately the Christian names of Michael and John.

At the Bury Farm, about a mile from Great Missenden, and on the eastern side of the house, which is ancient, there are distinct traces of a moat and the remains of what appear to have been fish-ponds.

At Buckland, in Moat Field, there is a deep moat inclosing about an acre of land, where formerly stood the mansion of some of the ancient lords of the manor—the Despensers and Nevilles.

At Aston Clinton, in a field known as the Vache, about a mile from the parish church, is a moated site inclosing about an acre and a half, and distinct traces of a large fish-pond. Foundations of buildings have been discovered here at various times. This estate belonged to the family of De la Vache, of Chalfont St. Giles.

**Bill Barnard (and SIGMA).**

This concludes my transcription of SIGMA's Bucks Herald items entitled "Moated Mansions in Bucks". In the next newsletter I will write about SIGMA himself, Richard Samuel Downs.

**Bill Barnard**

### **THE OLD SHOP (continued)**

Here is some more about the Elliott family.

### **William Phillip Elliot (known as Billy)**

He was the brother of Rosemary (Jane) Elliott (last proprietor of the Ivinghoe shop).



William was a signalman for British Rail at Sears Crossing signal box. This was the one controlling the trains at Bridego Bridge near Ledburn, Buckinghamshire. This was the bridge of the “Great Train Robbery” on Thursday, 8 August 1963.



**Train Robbers' Bridge i.e. Bridego Bridge  
near Ledburn, Buckinghamshire.**

In 1963, on the day of “The Great Train Robbery”, William should have been working at Sears Crossing signal box. On the previous day he received a telegram, delivered by a telegram boy, telling him not to go there and sent him elsewhere.

Following the robbery the Scotland Yard police investigated the legitimacy of the telegram as they believed it was a false telegram. Both William and the telegram boy were fingerprinted by the police. The story was told to me by Phil Elliott our new PIMS member and son of William Phillip.

### ***Reminder!***

The **Great Train Robbery** was the robbery of £2.6 million from a Royal Mail train heading from Glasgow to London in the early hours of Thursday, 8 August 1963, at Bridego Railway Bridge, Ledburn, near Mentmore in Buckinghamshire, England.

Just after 3:00 am on 8 August, the driver, Jack Mills from Crewe, stopped the train on the West Coast Main Line at a red signal light at Sears Crossing, Ledburn, between Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire and Cheddington in Buckinghamshire. The signal had been tampered with by the robbers

After this, a 15-strong gang led by Bruce Reynolds attacked the train. Other gang members included Gordon Goody, Buster Edwards, Charlie Wilson, Roy James, John Daly, Jimmy White, Ronnie Biggs, Tommy Wisbey, Jim Hussey, Bob Welch and Roger Cordrey, as well as three men known only as numbers "1", "2" and "3". A 16th man, an unnamed retired train driver, was also present at the time of the robbery.

**Sandra Barnard**

### **Life Member Jack Brantom. Jack with his cake on his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday.**



For many years Jack worked at the museum as a volunteer helping to restore numerous artefacts. Unfortunately, his failing eyesight eventually stopped him driving from his home in Leighton Buzzard. He was a keen model maker and there is a display of models he made in later years at home, even when his eyesight was failing, these are on display in the Crossley engine room.

Following his failing eyesight someone always brought him to

the Museum on our Open Days, and could be seen, always immaculately dressed in a suit, white shirt and tie and carrying a white stick.

**Norman Groom**



## **MEMBERSHIP 2017**

We currently have 140 members of PIMS, and if you find a "Membership Renewal Slip" inside this newsletter, then it will be a gentle reminder that you may have forgotten to renew this year.

**Bill Barnard Membership Secretary**

## **Letter to the Museum**

Dear All,

Just to say how pleasantly surprised we were by your museum and what a lovely day we had. We must have arrived just before 11am and were among the last one to leave. There was so much to do and see and the fact that Timothy (7) kept running back to the miniature railway, the narrow gauge train as well as returned 4 times to that lovely canal wharf model meant that we still have plenty to explore next time. Thank you to the lovely canal wharf gents who looked after Timmy so me and our friend could look at the Lancaster Bomber cockpit.

It is just a wonderful day out, everyone is so helpful and friendly, the refreshments are lovely and so is the entertainment (we have also returned 3 times that day to see the St Albans dancing group).

Timothy was so excited that waited until 10pm that night as wanted to show his dad the rope he made and tell him about his day and that he has to come with him in August as he will enjoy the classical cars as well.

We have been reminded about the event by the lovely ladies we have met at Edlesborough Carnival at your stall.

Thank you very much

**Petra, Timothy and Friend**

Totternhoe village

## **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 24<sup>th</sup> August**

There is no meeting this month.

## **Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September**

### **Roger Mason - Votes for Women**

Roger returns to the museum to explain how Women's fight to get the vote came about and, presumably, why they didn't have it in the first place. Today we take many things for granted but many of those things

were very hard fought for. Roger has some amusing anecdotes as well as the facts.

### **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October**

**Philomena Liggins** - Dropping off SOE Agents, supplies, radios etc to resistance fighters in WW2 using Lancaster, Halifax and Lysander planes.

An author in her own right, Philomena is a leading light at Bletchley Park and we are lucky she has agreed to talk to us at Pitstone. Her knowledge of many aspects of WW2 should make for a very interesting and lively evening and give us some idea of the extreme risks that were taken on our behalf and how the planes were adapted for this very special job.

### **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November**

**AGM** - Talk to be arranged.

### **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

**Frank Banfield** and his films from the archives  
**Pete Farrar** Publicity and Programme Secretary

### **DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Bucks Family History Society Open day.**

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> 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. This event covers many areas not only Buckinghamshire. There are many tables in two halls. Entrance is free.

**Sandra and Bill Barnard**

### **July Newsletter**

Dear members,

I hope you like the new look of our Newsletter with its colour cover.

**Sandra Barnard** Editor

### **FRONT COVER**

Rob Barber standing by the Traction Engine

**Picture Bill Barnard**

### **BACK COVER**

John Barber's Steam Car and Molly the Horse

**Picture Geoff Evans**

## **Open Days 2017**

Sunday 13th August

**Haddenham Bells (Bell Ringers)**

B.H. Monday 28<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Committee Officers:-**

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**Pitstone and Ivinghoe  
Museum Society**

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