

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



New Year 2019

EDITOR'S NOTE

Readers will be aware that the Autumn 2018 issue of the Newsletter was the last that was produced by Sandra Barnard. I feel that it is important that we are all aware of what Sandra has contributed over the years as she has been a stalwart of the museum's administrative group. Having joined us in 2001, Sandra took on the newsletter in 2004. One of her first innovations was to change the format from A4 to the folded document we now have. If we assume four editions a year, that represents an output of fifty five newsletters and, conservatively, around two hundred and twenty articles! As well as this remarkable achievement, Sandra has been the computer records archivist and latterly, officer, between the periods of 2006 and 2015. If you think that Sandra has stopped working for us, you might be surprised to find out that she is currently checking our photographic files and records for mistakes and will continue to attend open days where she and Bill make large amounts of our archives available to the public.

I would like to thank Sandra for what she has done and can only hope to emulate her example. It is my intention to take on the editorship of the newsletter, in addition to my usual job of secretary, but only for a short while. This is a job that could be done by any computer using member of the society, sat in the warmth and comfort of their own home. Please don't be shy about coming forward, we depend upon an active membership of the society and this is one role that could achieve much.

Dennis Trebble

MANAGER'S REPORT- New Year 2019

As another year comes to a close, I think we all have to give ourselves a pat on the back for getting the museum through another successful year and starting 2019 in a healthier state than we started 2018. We have around 60 active volunteers plus all those loyal supporters who come to our popular open days to show off their skills, sell their handmade products or just generally help with the running of the events. A hearty thank you goes out to you all and I wish you all the best for another fantastic year.

We have an official list of what we have ambitions to achieve during the closed season but how much we actually get done will to a large extent depend on the winter weather. The racking in the new storage shed is finished, awaiting stuff from the areas we want to refurbish, so we can at last work with some level of efficiency. I am getting some ideas formulated to allow us to display the carts, tractors and medium sized farm machinery in a more visitor friendly manner so let's hope we can at least get that done before the start of the new season.

By the time you read this we will have the new leaflets, so please do your own little bit, grab a handful and get them to as many places as you can, advertising our fantastic facility is the key to our success, so keep pushing out the message.

Best wishes for 2019

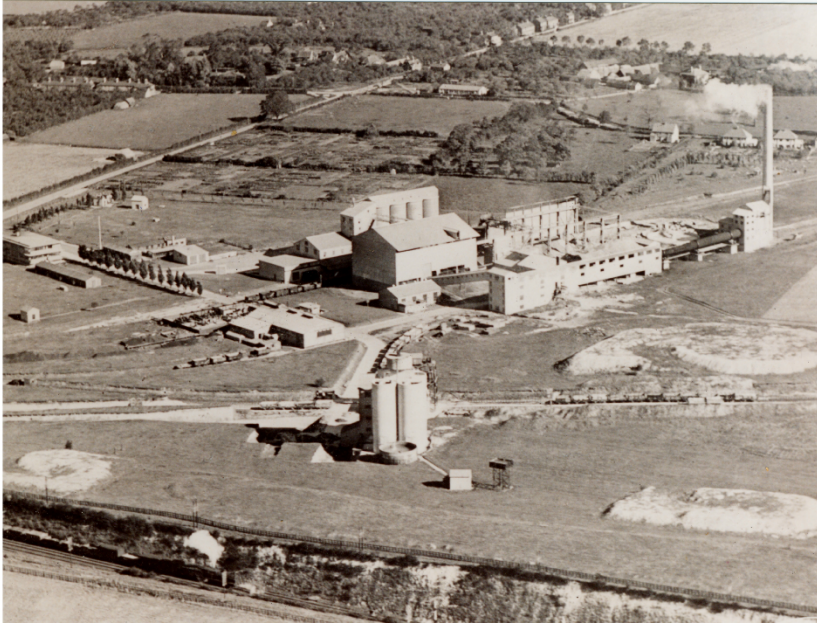
Pete Farrar
Museum Manager, Publicity and Programme Secretary

PITSTONE CEMENT WORKS

What might you think that the following have in common?

- Extensions to Heathrow runways
- Construction of the M25 and M11
- Development of the Channel Tunnel

They were all, to a greater or lesser extent, accomplished with the use of cement manufactured here at Pitstone. It was on the 25th February 1936 that the Wing Rural District Council approved the plan for the erection of a new cement works at Pitstone. Geologically speaking, the site was ideal in that chalk was exposed by past glacial action in a well drained location. In the process of site development, many jobs became available locally and these helped mitigate the effects of the early depression years of the decade. Paramount amongst these was the erection of a bridge over the railway, the construction of sidings, the opening up of the quarry faces and the improvement of local road access. By September 1937 the site was ready to begin production and on the 20th of the month, the kiln was fired for the first time. The capacity of the kiln was rated at 80,000 tonnes per annum. With production under way, the main office block was built (one of the few remaining buildings today) which received wide coverage in the architectural journals of the day.



Early days at the site

During WW2 the headquarters of Tunnel Cement moved from London to Pitstone (including 47 office girls), displacing the owner of Moat Farm. Wooden office blocks were erected for the Londoners and many were billeted locally. Motor transport being very restricted, the company bought a pony and trap from the Hawkins family and used this for bank runs to Tring, shopping and meeting visitors at the local stations. With the demise of the horse, bicycles became the favoured transport until the first company car arrived in 1953. It is hard to credit that the weekly bank run, at one stage, involved the company wages clerk cycling to Tring with a Gladstone bag tied to his carrier. This was filled with the week's wages plus a cash float and then taken back to Pitstone. There was never any security problem in that, in public perception, one man on a bicycle was hardly likely to be carrying any significant amount of cash! The local Home Guard used the cement works grounds for parades, exercises and target shooting. Jeff Hawkins was a corporal whilst the works manager and director were (by choice) privates. Throughout this period production continued and was particularly important for the construction of new airfield facilities across the larger area.

After the war, expansion was the order of the day. The company acquired both College and Folly farms, giving them, in total, around 1,000 acres. As demand for housing soared, so too did the demand for cement. A second kiln was started in 1951 and put into production by March 1952. Later, a third kiln was added (1954) and subsequently a fourth (1962). Both kilns 2 and 3 had similar productive capacities at 130,000 tonnes per annum, giving a total site capacity of 360,000 tonnes per year by 1955. By 1958 a feature that we now regard as ubiquitous was added – a works car park! This reflected not only increasing affluence in the local area but also followed a national trend.



The swinging sixties were marked by confidence in industrial expansion, with £7 million invested in a new kiln (number 5) in 1967. It may be of interest to note that a labourer's weekly wage at the time was in the order of £16 to £18 per week! This new kiln, when at full capacity, could produce 300,000 tonnes per year. Over its time at Pitstone, the works had depended upon coal to fire the kilns until post 1945 when oil took over. In 1970, this was, in its turn, replaced by gas sourced from the newly productive North Sea fields. 1973 marked the national peak of cement production and the declining sales after this time meant that plants had to be economically efficient to survive. The rapid rise in world oil prices and the government's decision to link gas prices to oil threatened the existence of Pitstone works. Kilns 1, 2 and 3 were closed down in May 1979 with numbers 4 and 5 reverting to coal firing. In the post 1979 period, around 150 employees were made redundant in an attempt to economise. In 1982, when RTZ cement was formed, surplus clinker from the group (from which the final product was formed) became available to grind at Pitstone. By 1987 there had been a moderate shift in demand for cement and kiln number 3 was recommissioned in June of that year.

By the end of the decade it was apparent that the Pitstone site was no longer economically viable in the long term strategy of the RTZ group. Consequently, in 1991 the site was closed, but this left a lot of loose ends, not the least amongst which were the open quarries and the deserted works. Significantly, the rail infrastructure was easily disposed of, there being a strong market for scrap steel. The clearance of the works site went on apace until in 1999 the landmark chimneys came tumbling down. The area, once cleared, formed the basis for the Castlemead development and the light industrial estate. Of the other quarries, College Lake became a wildlife sanctuary and local amenity.



Losing the landmarks

With the redevelopment of this part of Pitstone, the village has taken on the quality of a dormitory settlement. However, during the time of the works' existence, the dust nuisance, the passage of heavy lorries along rural roads, the noise pollution

and possible health consequences were always of public concern. It would be difficult for new inhabitants of the village to picture what it had been like in the recent past. Perhaps the only tangible link left is the six tonne roller from one of the kilns that is mounted at the entry to the museum.

CURIOSITY

Curiosity, it is said, is a distinctly feline trait, yet to work in a museum such as ours it is a very necessary human characteristic. How many times do we all walk by, for example, the rack saw, either on open days or during usual volunteer sessions and see the large sign that proclaims it to be the “Roseberry Rack Saw”? Who was Roseberry and what was his relationship to the area we live in such that we see his name so prominently?

A walk into the cowshed will also uncover any number of horticultural ephemera and certificates with the words “Entered by the Earl of Roseberry”. A moment’s research will reveal that the 5th Earl of Roseberry owned the Mentmore estate during the late Victorian era and passed it, on his death, to his son the 6th Earl in 1929. Having these few bare facts at my fingertips, I thought it worth doing a bit more digging to see what might be revealed.



The 5th Earl of Roseberry

Archibald Philip Primrose, Lord Dalmeny, 5th Earl of Roseberry was a Scot who has been described as a Liberal Imperialist in his politics. He was born in 1847 and at the age of thirty-one married Hannah, daughter of Baron Mayer Amschel de

Rothschild. She was said to be the richest heiress in the country, being the only child of her father who had died four years previously. The Earl was recognised as a brilliant orator, a fine marksman, a historian who specialised in writing biographies and a collector of antiquities. As a supporter of William Gladstone's government, he was, in 1886 made Foreign Secretary. Disillusionment with the government resulted in a short period in the post. By 1889 he had become Chairman of the London County Council and was considered to be one of the more forward looking of those who held that post. Unfortunately, his wife died in 1890 resulting in his withdrawal from public life. It was only the intervention of Queen Victoria, one of his staunch admirers, that brought him back to government for a second stint as foreign secretary between 1892 and 1894.

In order to help keep the various elements of his political and private lives in some sort of order he had employed Viscount Drumlarig as his private secretary. This young man was the son of the 9th Marquess of Queensberry and brother to Lord Alfred Douglas – notorious for his homosexual relationship with Oscar Wilde. In 1894, Viscount Drumlarig was killed in a shooting accident whilst part of a hunting party. His father was convinced that he was having some sort of romantic liaison with Roseberry, though the matter was never proven. With this matter unsettled, he took the post of Prime Minister between 1894 and 1895. As an aside it is worth noting that he was the richest PM that the UK has ever had. When he died in 1929, his estate was worth £1,500,122 – which converted to 2016 values works out at £83,688,000!

Throughout his ownership of Mentmore, he was able to pursue his love of horse racing by establishing two stud farms within one mile of the house. In 1894, *Ladas* won The Derby, a feat repeated in 1895 and again in 1905 by *Sir Visto* and *Cicero* respectively. His eldest son, later to become the 6th Earl, followed father's footsteps between 1906 and 1910, representing Midlothian in Parliament. By 1911, the 5th Earl had accrued the titles of Baron Epsom, Viscount Mentmore and Earl of Midlothian. Although a supporter of the 1914 -18 war, he did not re-enter government in spite of being asked to do so by Lloyd George in 1916. The last years of his life were blighted by the death of one of his sons in Palestine in 1917 and by his own stroke, suffered just before the signing of the Armistice in 1918. He spent the final years of his life in Epsom (he owned twelve such houses), almost blind and with little physical presence.



In 1929 Mentmore passed to his son Harry Mayer Archibald Primrose, 6th Earl Roseberry, who served as Secretary of State for Scotland in Winston Churchill's caretaker government of 1945 and thereafter as Chairman of the National Liberal Party.

So the next time you pass the rack saw you might just wonder where curiosity could lead you and how our local collection intersects the paths of histories of consequence!

Footnote:

Also in our collection at the museum is The Roseberry Cart. This is an interesting artefact: it is a night soil cart. Driven around the Mentmore Estate at regular intervals, it was used to remove soiled earth-closet material and replenish it with a mixture of wood ash, charcoal and fresh earth. In this way, the cottages of estate workers were kept free from disease. The system promoted good hygiene and ensured the workforce remained healthy. The cart is subdivided, longitudinally, into two and seems remarkably well preserved!

The Bucks Herald, Saturday, September 14, 1918

SOME BUCKS LOCAL NAMES:

The Personal Element (6&7)

Following on from the last newsletter's first instalment of this article, we continue with part 6. Please remember this is written in the English of the early 1900's.

BUCKINGHAM (concluded). The derivation quoted is as far from being satisfactory as the others; for, however closely it answers to the form of the first part of the word, it will not correspond in sense with the other part. Browne Willis derives the name of Buckingham from Buc (cervus), a buck or hart, and its vicinity to a forest. Lipscomb prefers Spelman's derivation, and says that Lysons should have shown some reason why the term book or charter land should have been applied to places where the nature of the tenure does not accord with the expression; or how Buckenham or Bockingham could have been an appropriate term for a town in which the tenures do not appear to have agreed with that signification. That, if the town were anciently situated in a forest, where were vast herds of deer, where no remarkable feature of the country, besides those and the woods they inhabited, presented itself to those who gave it the name, the term "bock" or "bucken" would be more likely to mean "bucks," in a place where there were many, than beech trees where there were few, and "ham," a home, agree perfectly with the site of a town on the border of a river, and a forest, of whatever trees that forest might have consisted; and bucks, feeding on the border of that forest, or disporting themselves on the banks of that river, would suggest an appellation which, in the simplicity of an early age, might have been readily adopted, as descriptive of situation, so as to entitle the name to be permanently annexed to the district.

I have thought it well to quote these various opinions, although I do not consider they are at all to the point. They are merely conjectures at best, their authors being misled, apparently, by considering the word to have been formed from Buck-ingham instead of Bucking-ham, its true meaning. The name means simply "ham," or home of the "Bocingas," a branch of an ancient Anglo-Saxon family, who made it the headquarters of their mark or settlement. Now, just a word or two about this family whose name has become so indissolubly connected with the town and county of Buckingham. According to the testimony of Ammianus Marcellanus, who served in the Roman Army in Britain, and has left an account of the inhabitants of this country at that time, the Emperor Valentinian, after the subjugation of the Teutonic tribes

called the Bucinobantes, sent a portion of them, about the beginning of the fourth century, under one of their chieftains, Fraomarius, to occupy certain districts near the eastern coast of our Island, and it has been conjectured with no little degree of probability that Buckingham and the names of several places in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, having a similar orthography, are to be traced to the Bucinobantine immigrants, or Buckings. They have left a corresponding witness of their former occupancy of the part of the Continent whence they came, in about thirty local names having the prefix "Buck" or "Bock."

I think I have now exhausted the list of local names derived from persons who can be identified; but there remains a large number of places named from the early settlers of whom nothing is known beyond their names, which are found in ancient chronicles, charters, and other documents. There is a kind of family likeness to be observed among these old Anglo-Saxon names, and the same name occurs repeatedly. This led to no little confusion, and gradually paved the way to the adoption of surnames. As illustrative of this point I may mention that, in a list still extant of the nuns in Romsey Abbey of a date very early in the 11th century, eight bore the name of Aelfgyfu, six of Aelflaed, four of Eadgyth, and four Eadgyfu, etc. Of the forty-two names in the list only seventeen are distinctive. We need not, therefore, be surprised that the same appellatives which occur among the local names of Bucks are also found in other parts of the country.

ADSTOCK. This word includes the name of the Anglo-Saxon settler Adda, which was common our early ancestors. The eldest son of Ida, first king of Bernicia, was called Adda, and there was a Mercian priest so named, who took an important part in the conversion of the Mid-Angles about the middle of the 7th century. In Adstock we have, no doubt, the inclosure among the trees which was the headquarters of the founder of the clan. His descendants were the Addingas, who, it appears, left the parent settlement and formed a subordinate community about a mile to the south, near the Bourne, which from them acquired the name of Addington. The same family, or another bearing a similar name, also founded a small community to the south-east of Oakley in a grove or small wood which has since been known as Addingrove. This Manor before the conquest belonged to Edith, the queen of Edward the Confessor. Upon this Lipscomb remarks:—"It seems probable that Queen Edith's name, however varied in orthography or pronunciation, gave appellation to this place, and that a considerable extent of lands in the vicinity of

the Forest of Bernwode was anciently appropriated to Royal Consorts." But against this opinion may be urged the fact that it bore its present name before the time Of Queen Edith.

CHOLESBURY. This is another interesting name derived from a personal designation. The terminal syllable, "bury," refers to the largest, most perfect and remarkable of the ancient entrenched positions found in the Chiltern district. The camp was constructed not only for defensive purposes, but also as a residence for the community which in early times made it their place of settlement. It was, no doubt, originally a fortified village of some Celtic tribe defined by a single vallum inclosing the summit or a slight eminence. It was subsequently strengthened by later occupants, very probably by the chieftain from whom it derived its name. The camp is about ten acres in extent, and within its entrenched oval are situated the church, churchyard, parsonage, etc., and there also a pond, the springs of which are said never to fail.

Cholesbury was not one of the earliest settlements, but for many centuries was included within the limits of Drayton, of which it formed an outlying member. The name is one among many others that might be adduced, the derivation of which could not be explained if the ancient form of the word had not been handed down to us. One of the early forms under which the word appears is Chilwaldebuorye, the bury or fortified inclosure of Chilwald, or, more correctly, Ceolwald, whose name found in a collateral branch of the royal house of Cerdic. The explanation of the word as "the fort among the chill wolds" may be dismissed as a mere guess.

BELLINGDON is the hill settlement of the Bellinga tribe, the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon Bel. The names of places in England commencing with Bel or Bil are supposed to be connected with cadets of the House of Belling or Billing, the remote ancestors of the royal race of Saxony. The first of the family who became distinguished in history was Herman, son of Billing of Stuckeshorn, who was invested with the Duchy of Saxony by the Emperor Otto 1, in 960, for his renown in war. In 1106 this family became extinct in the male line by the death of Duke Magnus, the last Billing. He left two daughters, Eilike and Wulthildis; the latter becoming sole heiress of Saxony on the death of her sister was married to Henry III of Bavaria, surnamed Niger, a descendant of the Guelph family.

SIGMA (To be continued) (Research by Bill Barnard.)

PIMS TALKS – 2019

SUMMARY OF FIRST THREE TALKS

Thursday January 24th.

We have a local man, John Hockey coming to talk to us about heraldry. For most of us, it's probably a subject we are aware of but have no knowledge of or interest in. I suspect that once we learn a bit about it, it will become much more interesting and enable us to get more out of our visits to historical places. John's work can be seen in his contributions to many local societies.

Thursday 28th Feb.

Our most prolific of speakers, Colin Oaks is always popular, with a list of over 300 different talks to his name with a bit of local history regarding the workhouses of the past, often spoken about with horror and dread but I think we may be able to learn something about our present system with many thousands of homeless people sleeping on the streets.

Thursday 28th March

We are very lucky to have persuaded George Goddard who was in charge of Pitstone Cement Works for over 15 years, to come and talk to us about the works that dominated the area for 50 years and how his co-operation was a key to the setting up of College Lake which has to some extent compensated for the disruption caused by the cement works.

A list of further talks is included separately.

All the talks start at 8pm but remember we try to start your evening from about 7.30 with some interesting videos which we try to balance with the subject being talked about, where possible. Anyway come and see your friends, learn a bit and enjoy an old fashioned evening at the museum.

Ronnie and Pete.

FRONT COVER

The Aylesbury Prune Orchard in winter.

BACK COVER

The Roseberry Racksaw

Date for your diary

Sunday 31st March

Model T Owners club

Open Days 2019

Easter Monday **22nd April**

Early Spring B.H. Monday **6th May**

Spring B.H. Monday **27th May**

Sunday **9th June**

Sunday **14th July**

Sunday **11th August**

Summer B.H. Monday **26th August**

Sunday **8th September**

Sunday **13th October**

Opening times from

11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Admission charges.

Adults £7, Children £2, under 5 free. Concessions over 65, £6.

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