

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



Spring 2019

EDITOR'S NOTE

You may recall that in the last newsletter I alluded to the fact that I intend to fill this post only until someone might be found who would be prepared to undertake the work on a more permanent basis. I am disappointed that no one has stepped forward to take this on. It also seems that the opportunity to offer an article or two for publication is not one that appeals to the membership. It means that the newsletter does not become a source of diverse interests, but is the product of one or two people.

Whilst the Cement Works and the Roseberry connection were “big” subjects that most would have some knowledge about, I have chosen this time to look at two pieces of modern agricultural history in the forms of the farm’s grain drying plant and the impact that mechanisation had upon harvesting in the 1950s.

Please give some thought to making a contribution to the newsletter. If you don’t feel able to write an article yourself, but would like a particular topic covered, do let me know.

Dennis Trebble

MANAGER'S REPORT- New Year 2019

We open our doors to the public on Easter Monday as usual, which this year is late, 22nd April, however for the first time we had a local Model T Ford Club meeting at the museum on 31st March, for their April Fools Run. Over 16 million Model Ts were made between 1908 and 1927 and they were strong and reliable so it's not surprising that there are still plenty around and they are still affordable. [A brief report follows later in the magazine.]

We have made good progress over the winter, the electricians have been doing fantastic work, gradually bringing our electrical system up to the standard required and the new storage shed is beginning to fill as other unofficial storage areas have been tidied.

The display tractors are back in the sheds built for them and the various carts now live in the open barn behind the meeting room where a new lighting system should show them off to their best. The mess outside the office has gone, the fire

extinguishing system is up to date and the reception area should be spruced up before Easter. The milling machinery in the mill barn (the far end of the big barn) can now be operated for the public, although we thought it wise to slow it all down for safety reasons.

We have two new exhibits given to us from Chiltern Open Air Museum: a wood planing machine which we are installing next to the rack saw, and an absolutely enormous electric chain saw which is an electric version of the big one we already display in the rack saw area. This new saw takes a super human effort just to lift, let alone operate with any sort of control, for any length of time. It makes one realise just how pampered we are these days compared to the folk of a few generations ago, this is something that only museums like ours can clearly demonstrate.

We have decided on a design format for some new direction signs to be put up around the site, to help people on open days find their way around and in particular to find their way to the toilets but we always have to balance the need for directions with the danger of defacing the site with a sea of notices. I guess in the future someone will come up with an app for a smartphone to guide people round!

We are still talking about reducing our use of disposable cups and buying a commercial dishwasher but as with all simple things it's not as simple as you would think! Commercial dishwashers are expensive and it would only be used a dozen or so times each year.

Lastly, an amusing insight into how things have changed. I was recently browsing through some old records when I came across the minutes of the first ever committee of the original Pitstone History Society where it was agreed that you could not be a member of the committee if you were over 25 years old! I guess you could now rewrite that as ***under*** 65 years old! As Nick Coffey from BBC 3 Counties Radio said, we're like an eccentric version of care in the community but bringing enormous pleasure to a lot of people.

Keep up the good work everyone and thanks for your support.

Pete Farrar

Museum Manager, Publicity and Programme Secretary

MEMBERSHIP REPORT- New Year 2019

At the last AGM it was agreed to create a new membership category called “Volunteer”. The is in addition to our “Life”, “Honorary”, “Standard” and “Corporate” categories.

“Life” membership is awarded, by the committee, to long standing members who have given a huge commitment of their time to the museum.

“Honorary” membership is given to people, for some invaluable short-term work they have completed for the museum or for their services.

“Volunteer” membership will be offered to museum volunteers, who do more than 20 days’ work a year, at, or for, the museum, and are awarded a year’s membership at a lower cost than “Standard” members. For the first year, at least, the cost would be free. Non-volunteer partners or spouses will have to renew as a “Standard” member where joint membership had previously been issued. Please use the enclosed renewal form for this.

“Standard” membership will be, as now, for people who support the museum by paying a fee (£12 for a single person, or £18 for joint) and receive the quarterly newsletter, reduced entrance fees at our monthly meetings, and free entry to the museum on Open Days.

For most of you, there will be a “Standard” membership renewal form included with this newsletter. As usual, cheques are preferred, but I will accept any form of payment at our Open Days. Come and see me in the Meeting Room.

Bill Barnard
Membership Secretary

THE CONCRETE SILOS AT PITSTONE GREEN FARM

There is an area of the museum site that is at once drab and unprepossessing, which contains our grain silos. You might ask yourself why we maintain these on site and what their contribution to the farm had been.

First, an historical context. At the end of the war in 1945, the UK needed to maximize food production. Before the Second World War started, Britain imported 55 million tons of food a year. By the end of 1939, this had dropped to 12 million, and food rationing was introduced at the start of 1940. The stated post-war aim was to increase UK food production to 60% above pre-war levels. Food rationing did not end until 1953. The 1947 Agricultural Act was passed to help facilitate that aim. In 1946, grain drying experiments at Ashkam Bryan College, York, suggested that an on-farm installation that would speed up the drying of grain could be successfully designed for a farm growing about 150 acres of crop. In order to trial this suggestion, it was desirable to erect a full-sized plant in order to study the economic side as well as the technique of drying grain in bins on a farm. A combination of circumstances led to the choice of Pitstone Green Farm for the prototype installation. Geoff Hawkins agreed to pilot this scheme.

There are six storage/drying units (the silos), each of 25 tons capacity, originally filled by elevator and belt conveyor. Each bin is 11 feet high and 13 feet in diameter. The power for the electric motors used for ventilation fans and the emptying conveyor, as well as the heating source, was controlled from the Fan Room, located at the rear of the group of six silos. Air ducting lies beneath the bins and the whole complex is covered by a Dutch barn with a span of 30 feet, the height being 15 feet to the eaves and 18 feet 4 inches to the centre of the roof.



The original silos and Dutch barn structure in 1948

These silos were not just a grain drying and storage plant. They formed a part of a complete grain drying-handling-milling-mixing-bagging plant. The dried grain was transferred, overhead, to the Mill Barn (at the rear of the Big Barn) for processing prior to onward sales.

In total, 17 tons of cement were required. The location at Pitstone was ideal, given that the Pitstone Tunnel Cement Works were quite literally on this farm's doorstep. In the immediate post-war phase, steel, to be used as reinforcement in the structures, was in short supply. The solution was to use surplus flexible steel mesh that had been designed to lay over soft ground for heavy vehicles to transit: such material was available via war surplus outlets. The ducting was cast on site and construction was fitted in between farm jobs. Some outside labour was used, particularly for the laying of the 6,000 bricks. Total costs for the project were given as £1009 /13 / 9.



Construction method on site

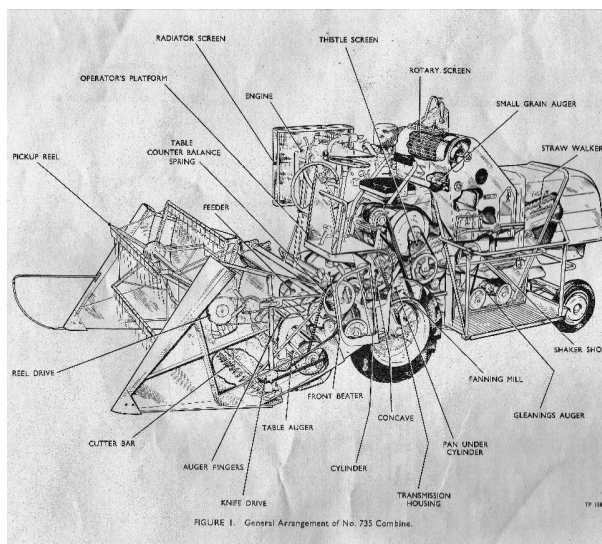
Alongside the six silos are to be found two smaller storage bins of similar construction. These were never part of the original installation and were a “local add on” used purely as a storage facility and built some time after the original installation. They are covered by a sloping roof abutted to the Dutch barn.

There is an important nation-wide legacy to the story. Grain drying is an active area of manufacturing and research. Most recently computer models have been used to predict product quality by achieving a compromise between drying rate, energy consumption, and grain quality. It is not unreasonable to suggest that without the prototype “guinea-pig” installation at Pitstone Green Farm, much of the subsequent research by British agricultural science might not have been quite so productive. Thus we have an agricultural “first” at the museum, the prototype of systems in use today. Unfortunately this complex is in danger of significant deterioration as the roof of the Dutch Barn structure has aged and no longer provides the protection it once did. We are keen to improve matters but the costs are significant, the access difficult and the whole area in which the silos are located is in need of re-development. This is clearly a project that needs a lot of careful planning and is currently under consideration.

A SPECIAL MUSEUM EXHIBIT

What has a 1.5 litre engine, three forward gears for which the maximum speed in each is 2.24mph, 3.72 mph and 9.63mph and a reverse gear capable of 7.25mph? It also has four wheels and a reverse steering coupling. Well, whatever it is, we have one at the museum – a Massey Harris 735 Combine Harvester. This is a 1957 machine, with a six feet wide cutting action and the ability to raise the cutting height to 21”. The machine is in “as last used” condition and gives a snapshot of how mechanisation on the farm has progressed.

Prior to the advent of such machines, cereal crops were either cut by hand or by a reaper/binder machine that was usually horse drawn. The stooks of cut cereals had then to be threshed by hand or by a threshing box attached to a steam engine. This separated the grain from the straw. To be able to combine all of these actions in one machine was an immense labour saving process and allowed the harvest to be gathered much more rapidly than might have been the case throughout the 1930s and 1940s.



Our particular machine has a partial log concerning its use. It was initially purchased by H. Williamson of Pitstone and used on his farm. Instead of recording mileage, the log recorded a much more useful piece of data – the number of hours in use. In the 1963 harvest, for example, the following was noted:

Between September 9th and September 17th, 28½ hours' use
 Between September 18th and September 20th, 15½ hours' use
 Between September 21st and September 25th, 6 hours' use
 Between September 26th and September 27th, 6 hours' use.

The machine was used for 56 hours over an eighteen day period. During that time, all greasing and oiling points would have had to be topped up at least twice and all chains greased and re-tensioned. In order to maximise on the outlay of such a machine, it is not surprising to find that it was also to be found working at Pitstone Green Farm, on loan. The company advertising material reckoned that the combine could cut and process at the rate of approximately one acre per hour. It was well suited to the less than flat fields in which it worked and was said to be stable on slopes of up to 1 in 2.

An interesting aspect of the engine is that it was designed to start and warm up on petrol and then switch to V.O. (vapourising oil) once running. Under such circumstances it produced a heady 23.7 bhp at 2,400rpm. For demonstration purposes we only ever run the engine for short periods and stick to using petrol.



In these days of extended manufacturers' warranties and corrosion protection, we take for granted that a new vehicle comes with significant such protection. This wasn't always the case; the warranty for this machine states that

In the event of a defect being disclosed in any part or parts of any new product , the Company will (provide the part or parts are returned to it or its authorised representatives within six calendar months from the date when the product was delivered new to the Purchaser), if satisfied on its examination of the part or parts that failure was due to defective material or workmanship, make good the defective part or parts at a factory to be nominated by it.

Six months seems a terribly short time for what would have been such an expensive piece of capital outlay. In other words, the farmer had only one harvest season in which to satisfy himself that all was well before wrapping the machine for the winter and laying it up until the next harvest. None the less, judging by the survival rate of this particular model, it would seem that they were really built to last and both in the UK and the USA they are regular attendees at countryside shows and demonstrations. As well as short videos of these machines in action, YouTube provides a twenty minute manufacturer's promotional film that is well worth watching and gives an atmospheric back and white vision of 50s agriculture.

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.

There yet remain several more places in the county the names of which are derived from those of the early Anglo-Saxon settlers, and may be briefly dealt with. The derivation of some of these names is so plainly indicated by the form of the word that no particular explanation is required, while in other instances the modern orthography has become so changed during the lapse of time as to obscure their origin. In these cases the older form of the personal member of the names will be added in parenthesis. In a few examples a brief explanation will be given.

Those place-names that end in "hall" evidently acquired their designation from an individual, and not from a family. At first sight Worminghall appears to be an exception; but the "ing" has gradually been adopted to assimilate the form of the word with others of similar but not identical origin. The hall of Weorm is now represented by the Manor House, and its close connection with the Church is still preserved, for you can step from the grounds surrounding the house straight into the churchyard. There are two other "halls" to which I ought to refer.

Ludgershall. Kennet had an idea that this word contained the name of King Lud, to whom tradition assigned a Royal seat in the contiguous parish of Brill; and a little plot of ground near the parsonage house of Ludgershall, encompassed with a moat, is traditionally pointed out as the site of King Ludd's Hall. I need scarcely add that, although his name is continually cropping up in connection with various place-names, there was never such a person as King Lud, his mythical majesty being only the creation of the fertile imagination of old Geoffrey of Monmouth. Lipscomb, the county historian, says the place is supposed to have been called Ludgar's Hall from its soil and situation on the verge of a marsh, denominated Otmoor, in Oxfordshire. The word is doubtless a personal name, but who Loedgar was that erected his "heal" on the spot it is impossible to say.

Doddershall. The orthography of this word has undergone alteration, following, as usual, the pronunciation, Dodda's Hall, easily into its more modern form. There were two Mercian eorldermen [the only word I can find like this is ealdormen or elder man-Bill Barnard] brothers, in the time of Edmund Ironside, known as Odda and Dodda. The modest hall which the latter erected subsequently grew into an important moated mansion, and the estate became a manor, giving its name to a family which possessed it.

Bledlow. This name has explained as derived from an Anglo-Saxon compound meaning the bloody field or hill, and is supposed to have its origin in a battle believed to have been fought here between the Danes and the Saxons. The figure of a cross cut through the turf into the chalk above the hamlet of Wainhill is conjectured to have been made to commemorate this battle, in which the pagan Danes were destroyed by the Christian Saxons. If this opinion is correct, the battle probably took place under Edward the Elder previous to the Treaty of Ickford in 907. The name, however, appears in a document of the 11th century as Bleddan Hlawe, a form which certainly brings it under the definition of a personal name, its signification being the tumulus or burial mound of Bleda, an explanation which is supported by the verdict of modern writers upon the subject.

CROSSES. The above mention of the Bledlow Cross reminds me that there are three places in Bucks to which the word Cross is affixed all derived from personal appellations, the affix in each case having reference to cross-roads. There is the well-known Gerrard's Cross, which, since the opening of the G.W. and G.C. Joint Railway has become a favourite residential locality. The roads which intersect each other on the Common are the London and Oxford road, and the road from Chalfont through Stoke to Slough and Windsor. Near the point of intersection in olden times lived a family whose name been variously written Gerrard, Jarret, "Jallus," etc.

Butler's Cross, near the foot of Coombe Hill, at the intersection of the Icknield Way and the road from Aylesbury to Hampden, was named from the family Butler formerly resident there. In Potter' Cross we have the recollection brought down to us of a manufacture once common in South Bucks. A coarse description of pottery was produced, and hawked by dealers from village to village in low vans and sometimes in donkey carts.

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

STOP PRESS.....SUNDAY 31st MARCH 2019

MODEL T FORD RALLY



A small section of the Model T orchard car park

To see one Model T Ford on the road is quite a spectacle, to see two or even three together is remarkable. Yet on Sunday we had **sixty eight** of these redoubtable vehicles at the museum and their body styles encompassed almost every iteration of the car. Drivers with partners, families and the family dog turned up and were a thoroughly pleasant group with which to interact. At the same time, some thirty eight vehicles from the Morgan Owners Club also appeared and added to the general feeling of bonhomie that pervaded the day. Food was served in the Big Barn and the museum's displays were opened to all. This provided us with a useful pre-season shake down that could be usefully repeated in the future.



Morgans of all kinds.

Programme Report

Our first two talks have been excellent and well received by those attending, let's hope it's a sign of things to come, we have become good friends with George Goddard who has liaised closely with us as he has got his talk together, he is quite remarkable man whose management skills seem to have played a large part in the successful transformation of an ugly worked out chalk quarry into the wonderful nature reserve, that we now know as College Lake. April 25th sees the return of a very amusing speaker, Paul Rabbits. Paul spoke to us before about bandstands and despite being

named in a book, as being one of Britain's most boring men, he was fantastic, informative and very amusing. This time he is talking about our British parks and I'm confident that it will be a great evening.

May 23rd we welcome a new name to our list as Timothy Watson comes to talk about his travels with a 1/3 scale traction engine. I'm told by one of our members that knows him, that he is a very good speaker and very knowledgeable on numerous topics.

Thursday 23rd June is one we have been looking forward to, as Norman Groome comes to give us his thoughts on the early days of The Museum. His hard work and dedication had a big influence on how we got to where we are now and his talk should be very interesting to all of us who care about our success. Come early if you want a seat !

The following two PIMS events are the two that you need to book in advance, a booking form should be included with your newsletter. The first, July 25th is the regular visit by Stephen Hearn to talk about and to value your antiques, Stephen has been a loyal supporter of The Museum for many years, for which we are very grateful. The second event you need to book is a visit to the wonderful Trenchard museum at RAF Halton. You need to be there for 2pm and very importantly, being a ministry of defence establishment, you will need to bring some form of identification in the form of a passport, a photo driving licence or a bus pass or you may be refused entry.

Please note that if you are booking for the events in July and August, ***do not combine anything to do with membership, with PIMS events. It makes life very complicated !***

Thanks - Ronnie & Pete

PIMS TALKS – 2019

Most talks take place in the meeting room at the Museum. They start at 8pm sharp but there are interesting videos showing from 7.30. The cost is £2 for members and £3 for non-members. The visit to Tring Park and the antiques evening need to be booked in advance and please note the November AGM starts at 7.30.

FRONT COVER *Spring blooms in the old tractor tyres*

BACK COVER *Mowing the orchard in preparation for open season.*

Date for your diary

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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Deputy Chairman

Position vacant

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**Paul the Mower at work on our
Fordson in the orchard**



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