



# Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



GB5PGM Amateur Radio Station

Autumn 2024

## **Executive Committee Officers**

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### **Treasurer**

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### **Secretary**

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## **Executive Committee Members**

### **Museum Manager, Publicity and Programme Secretary**

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## **Other Contacts**

### **Membership Secretary**

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### **Dancers**

Tricia Banks and David Waller

## EDITOR'S NOTE



Following Dennis Trebble's move away from the area, I have taken over the role of Editor for the Newsletter. I know that the Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society would like to thank Dennis for his many years of hard work, including the quarterly newsletters and his volunteering in general.

In this issue, find out more about the new amateur radio area in the Science room and how the archiving is maintained here at Pitstone. In addition, we have included details for the AGM and dates when the museum will be open next year.

Are there any particular areas of the Museum that you would like to know more about? Why not send me an email and let me know.

Lyn Asquith

[newslettereditor@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:newslettereditor@pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

## MANAGER'S MUSINGS

It's mid-September and at home, we've just swept the chimney and will probably put the central heating on this evening. When I was young, I used to cringe as the old people moaned about being cold. Now I'm one of them, I moan about the cold all the time (except when it's too hot!).

The weather has been relatively kind to us for Open Days this year compared with what was predicted and they have been a great success. Well done to everyone, we've had many happy visitors and lots of smiling faces.

I've just finished the calendar for next year so when you receive it, please put the dates in your diary. We were short of helpers on some Open Days this season and it's very embarrassing when we advertise exhibits, only for them to be shut on the day.

One of the things that needs to be organised are the monthly talks. We've agreed to run them only in the closed season. However, holding them in the afternoon was not a huge success. Instead of more people, we had different people and usually fewer in number which is a shame, because we've had some really great subjects and speakers. Please let us know what you think and keep an eye out for details of the first ones (October - tbc & November).

We are lucky to have an enthusiastic couple take over production of the newsletter. Lyn and Clive look like they are just what we were looking for, so give them a lift off by sending them something interesting such as Museum anecdotes or a brief summary of your life story and particularly how you became involved with the Museum.

That's about it for now. Let's do everything we can to make our last Open Day a great success (13<sup>th</sup> October) and remember, we still need people to fill vital posts such as membership secretary, catering manager, PIMS talks and other executive committee general posts to replace members as they mature gracefully.

Well done to everyone for your hard work and dedication to a fantastic Museum.

Pete Farrar & Dave Kirkwood

## **A SPECIAL THANK YOU**

Bill and Sandra Barnard will be retiring from their volunteering roles at the end of October. Most recently, Bill has been our Membership Secretary and Sandra has compiled photographs and information for our displays, as well as developing much of the genealogy for the museum records, archives and displays. Having both volunteered at Pitstone for over twenty-five years, they have helped in many capacities for the Museum.



We would like to express our thanks for their dedication over the years, and wish them all the best for the future.

## ANTIQUES EVENING – 25TH JULY 2024

This was a well attended event, giving people the opportunity to bring along an item to be valued. There was a good array of different objects, ranging from WW1 memorabilia, jewellery and even firearms!

Before the valuations started, the volunteers who work in the café provided attendees with a variety of different cheeses to suit all palettes and wine or soft drinks.

Stephen Hearn, the Auctioneer from Tring Market Auctions was highly entertaining, regaling us with tales of his experience as an Auctioneer over the years as well as valuing the items that those attending had brought along.



If you have not been to one of our events before, I can highly recommend them. Events are normally included in the Newsletter if there is enough time and if not, a separate email is sent out to keep you updated. They are also available to view on the Pitstone website:

<https://www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk/museum-society.htm>



## PITSTONE VOLUNTEERS: Clive Asquith

### Vintage Radio and Electronics - Amateur Radio Display



I joined Pitstone Museum early this year as a volunteer. I have visited the museum a number of times over the past 30+ years, first time with my radio club on a private tour to see the Lancaster cockpit (now relocated at the Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial Museum, Manston, Kent).

My first exposure to amateur radio goes back to the days when I had an interest in aircraft, which included listening to the air band on an old Russian radio, purchased from an advert in a Sunday newspaper. There were many of these around at the time and of dubious quality. The airband frequencies are close to the 2m amateur band. Frequently there was interference from an amateur radio operator a few doors up my road. I could also hear him on my medium wave am radio when he was transmitting on the 160m band.

This kindled an interest in radio at the age of 15. My Physics teacher at school had an old army 19 Set, covering some of the short wave bands, which I was able to bring home and play with. It wasn't long before I joined the Radio Society of Great Britain and become a short wave listener, as we were known as in those days. Around the same time I joined the Dunstable Downs Radio Club and became an active member and have held a number of committed posts over the years.



My interest was short wave communication so, having taken the Radio Amateurs Examination, had to learn morse code, so that I could obtain a full Class A license to access all the amateur bands. If you did not do the morse in those days, you were restricted to VHF and frequencies above. Morse code was still being used by the military and marine operators so it was deemed necessary that amateurs should be able to decode distress messages if required.

I have been a licensed Radio amateur holding the callsign G4ENB for nearly 50 years. On a visit to the Museum in 2023, the wire that goes across the Rick Yard to the trees, drew my attention to the vintage radios. Coincidentally, the Museum had been particularly keen to find someone for that area and one of my ex-work colleagues at Pitstone, knowing I did radio, suggested I should join the museum as a volunteer and set up a radio station. So back in March this year, this what I did.

The display area within the vintage radio and electronics section has now been updated with a large radio map of the world and other information about amateur radio. (see cover photo). It also includes some contact cards from nearly 100 years ago at the dawn of radio when everything was experimental. There will now be live radio demonstrations at the majority of open days, where voice and morse code transmissions are made to other amateurs worldwide.

A special callsign, GB5PGM, has been obtained from Ofcom for use on open days. Details of the station and the museum are available to all amateurs on their worldwide web site [www.qrz.com](http://www.qrz.com), which is used to log contacts and obtain details on location, equipment and other relevant information. It is an excellent way to publicise the museum and already has well over 400 hits to date.

The amateur radio station is still a work in progress. A new aerial has just been installed, which is much easier to tune and gives us access to more bands. The 40m shortwave band is used on open days to make contact with stations in the UK. We can also go onto 20m and other higher frequencies to contact stations outside the UK. Contacts with North America have already been made on 17m and, with us being at the peak of the 11 year sunspot cycle, now is a good time to make contacts all round the world.

For the future we are looking to add some interactive displays for visitors and graphics showing how radio signals propagate round our planet..



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## **PITSTONE VOLUNTEERS: Sue Denty, Archivist**

### **Keeping Track**

We all have things that we enjoy doing and niches that we fall into. When I started volunteering at the museum, I sort of fell into the role of Archivist. Just as well really, as I lack the skills to repair machinery or the inclination to cut the grass, but I do enjoy being the archivist.

I've been asked to describe what this involves – so here goes.

My central aim is to maintain an up-to-date list of all the many items in the museum. We can then locate items already in the collection, see what information we hold and answer queries by members of the public.

Originally, artifacts were listed and described in the 'Big Red Book'. The ledger is now a faded brown book but is still available to view in the office. After this came a Card Index which was followed by a Computer Spreadsheet.

This Excel Spreadsheet, started by Norman Groom, is still in use today.

Some years ago, the museum decided to try for 'Museum Accreditation'. This resulted in a determined effort to number and list all the artifacts that had slipped through the net. This was and still is a requirement of the Accreditation process. This is still ongoing.


We still have a constant trickle of new items arriving at the museum, some are dropped off anonymously, others brought in to the museum members and others by visitors; hopefully all with completed paperwork. Each item is then considered before adding to the collection.

The process is as follows:

Ideally, items arrive with a completed Accession Form, which ensures that ownership of the artifact is transferred to the museum. Often, I seek the help of knowledgeable museum members to discover more about the items and to decide where to display them.



An internet search also helps. Items are then on their way to becoming artifacts. They are given a unique number and a location, before they are photographed, described and details entered on the spreadsheet.

E618	Hercules Cycle	Men's black, 3 speed, Hercules cycle, 1950's, with pump, lamp & trouser clips.	O Big Barn	
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The information is then used by John Powell, who performs his magic and posts it on the Museum Intranet.

If you would like to find out more or view the 'Big Red Book,' drop into the office.

Sue Denty

*Heritage Park Intranet at **[www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk/pims](http://www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk/pims)**  
Type into the address bar of your favourite Web Browser. A google search will not find the site as it has been created for volunteers / members of the Society and is not intended to be accessed by the general public.*

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER AT PITSTONE?

Volunteering at Pitstone is a great opportunity to use your existing skills, enhance them or enable you to learn new skills within a fun and friendly environment. Volunteers meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings to repair and maintain the museum and work on various projects.

In addition to the roles Pete Farrar mentioned in 'Managers Musings,' we would also welcome anyone who can help maintain our grounds and assist on our open days. Being a volunteer can take up as much or as little time as you have available and there is not the necessity to come every week.



if you are interested, please contact Pete Farrar:  
01525 221583 or [manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

## **OPEN DAYS 2024**

**All Open Days are from 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.**

13 <sup>th</sup> October	Sunday (this year's last open day)
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## **OPEN DAYS 2025**

21st April	Easter Monday
5th May	May bank holiday Monday
26th May	Spring bank holiday Monday
8th June	Sunday
13th July	Sunday
10th August	Sunday
25th August	Summer bank holiday Monday
14th September	Sunday
12th October	Sunday

Free Parking is available in the Orchard.

**AGM: 17th October 2024, 3.00 p.m.**

In addition to the wonderful exhibits, on our Open Days you can also enjoy the Craft Fair in the Barns. Here, you can find an array of wonderful gifts for any occasion. With Christmas not too far away, you may want to come and grab some early presents.

There are also different demonstrations on our Open Days, which may include pottery demonstrations, barn and stationary engines, lace makers, tractor rides to the windmill and a blacksmith.

*Hungry?* While you are visiting, make sure you enjoy the light refreshments which are on sale in the café. Rolls, a wonderful range of cakes and a variety of hot and cold drinks are all available, at very reasonable prices.

## MUSEUM TALKS 2024

### **Farming in the Chilterns - Thursday 28th November - 2.30 p.m.**

As part of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project, Nick Marriner of Chiltern Landscapes, (formerly the Chiltern Conservation Board) will talk about landscape scale conservation in the Chilterns. Nick will share the work he has undertaken over the last 4 years, with a passionate group of farmers in the Central Chilterns Farmer Cluster. He will tell the story of the Cluster group, its origins, the work it has been undertaking and how the Chilterns Conservation Board have provided support. He is looking forward to your insights and questions.

Members: £2, Guests £3

### **Dates for your diary:**

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan. PIMS talk tbc

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. PIMS talk tbc.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March PIMS talk tbc.

Our talks and events cover a wide range of topics, so why not come along and support the Museum?

Equally, if you know anyone who may be willing to give a talk or suggest subjects that may be of interest, please contact Pete Farrar, Museum Manager, Publicity and Programme Secretary (01525 221583).

### **PS**

Were you aware that the Museum can be opened at other times (usually a Tuesday or Thursday) for school parties and adult group visits for a small charge, by prior arrangement only. If you know any groups who may be interested, please ask them to contact [manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk) for further details.

***Do you use social media? If so, it would be great, if you could give Pitstone a mention! Spread the word!***



**Foden miniature flatbed steam wagon 'Emma'**  
**August Open Day**

**Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society**

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