



# Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



**Peter Farrar**

**6th February 1948 - 1st December 2024**

## Winter 2024

## **Executive Committee Officers**

### **Acting Chairman**

**John Powell**

vicechairman@pitstonemuseum.co.uk

### **Vice Chairman**

### **Treasurer**

Lesley Herriott

treasurer@pitstonemuseum.co.uk

### **Secretary**

Gill Patschinsky

secretary@pitstonemuseum.co.uk

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## **Executive Committee Members**

### **Museum Manager**

Dave Kirkwood 07973 154170

manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk

### **Deputy Museum Manager**

Lionel Birch

thebirchs73@hotmail.co.uk

Simon Heaton

simon52b@btinternet.com

Allen Fairbrother

allen8686.af@gmail.com

Robert Barber

rwb289@gmail.com

Paul Chapman

paulthemower@gmail.com

John Youngs

jryoungs1@outlook.com

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## **Other Contacts**

### **Membership Secretary**

John Powell

membership@pitstonemuseum.co.uk

### **Archivist**

Sue Denty

archivist@pitstonemuseum.co.uk

### **Craft Co-ordinators**

Tony and Jill Baxter

craftstalls@pitstonemuseum.co.uk

### **Newsletter Editor**

Lyn Asquith

newslettereditor@pitstonemuseum.co.uk

### **Trading and Programme Secretary**

Ronnie Farrar 01525 221582

### **Dancers**

Tricia Banks and David Waller

## EDITOR'S NOTE



It was with great sadness to hear Peter Farrar passed away at the beginning of December. He will be sorely missed by those who knew him and a tremendous loss to the Museum. I enjoyed working with Pete for the short time I have been involved with the newsletter. I am sure everyone has their own special memories of him. Rob Henry has written a personal tribute to Peter, having worked with him for many years at the Museum.

The final Pitstone Open Day on 13th October, following a very wet spell, was cold but dry and very busy.

In this issue, find out more about the Craft Co-ordinators, who are based in the Barn plus one of Pitstone's regular visitors Rob, and his companion 'Bel.'

The three Museum talks so far have been extremely interesting. If you have not been to one of these events before, I can highly recommend them and details of the remaining talks are featured later in the newsletter. These are also available to view on the Pitstone website: <https://www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk/museum-society.htm>

To help save on postage, volunteers can now collect their copies of the Newsletter when they attend on a volunteering day. In addition, if you would be happy to receive your copy via email, please message John Powell: [membership@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:membership@pitstonemuseum.co.uk).

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**

My first Manager's Musings starts with sadness. On 1st December 2024, Peter Farrar, the Museum's original Manager, lost his battle with cancer. I was his Deputy for a while. Last year, Peter was given the honour of becoming the Museum's Chairman and I took over the role of Manager. I had hoped he would continue to mentor me, but sadly, it wasn't to be.

He will be missed. His enthusiasm for our Museum has certainly rubbed off on me and Peter's spirit will always be here. As a Manager, he had fulfilled this role for over 10 years. With his training and the support of my Deputy, Lionel Birch and our wonderful volunteers, I hope to follow in his footsteps.

He was there to see another successful year pass by and start some of the jobs we need to do during the down time of Winter.

As we undertake general maintenance, update the museum, archives and all the other jobs that need to be done, it is also important to enjoy the togetherness of a chat, tea or coffee and a biscuit or two. It is not all about work and jobs are still completed.

On a sunny Sunday in November, I was happy to open the Museum for a joint visit by the Midshires & Search & Rescue and Search Dogs Buckinghamshire for training exercises (see back cover for photograph).

We ended the year with our fish and chip Christmas lunch. This also entailed a quiz, with Gill as our Quizmaster. Once again my table came last!

We look forward to opening once again to hear the cries of happy children and parents, the music of the folk dancers, the whistles of the visiting steam engines, plus all the other attractions. I can't wait. A fun day to be had by all. See you all soon and Happy New Year.

Dave Kirkwood, Manager

## **A PERSONAL TRIBUTE**

Sadly, in December, we lost our chairman, Pete Farrar.

He had a long, brave battle with illness. In spite of this, he continued to make a contribution to the Museum and, with assistance, manage the site until taking on the role of Chairman.

I will leave it to other volunteers, who knew Pete for much longer than I, to put together a full memory of his time with PIMS.

My time with him was very rewarding. His extensive knowledge, and innovative approach to problems, were invaluable to the Museum and to me personally, with the projects I worked on.

Thankfully, Pete was able to attend our last open day of 2024.

While he looked after the running of the Crossley, we were able to reminisce about our past experiences. Apart from our interests related to engineering, we shared some history with the music scene of the 1960's.

In similar ways we met with the people and bands of the time.

His no-nonsense, direct, but friendly approach has left it's mark on all of us volunteers.

He will be sorely missed.

Please spare a thought for Ronnie and the family at this difficult time.

My friend Pete - rest in peace.

Rob Henry, Previous Chairman

## PITSTONE VOLUNTEERS:

### Tony and Jill Baxter— Craft Co-ordinators

We first came to Pitstone Museum as helpers in the pottery-making area, which at the time was organized by the Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild, before moving into the Barn, with us taking



a craft stall to sell our pottery. When Brenda Grace, who previously organised the craft stalls announced she would be retiring, we offered to take over as we enjoyed the events and wanted to ensure it kept going.

When we are not here, we are involved in several other activities to keep us out of mischief and ensure we don't get bored!

We have a small studio at home where we make our pottery. In estate agent terms, it is 'bijou,' but we manage to fit in our kiln, small potter's wheel and most of the materials we need, although recently, things have spilled over into the garden shed.

Since 2010, Tony has been a volunteer at the De Havilland Aircraft Museum at London Colney in St Albans. He is a member of the team which over several years, restored a static replica of a DH88 racer (the rare green plane in their main hanger). He has also worked on several other projects there, including their Comet Airliner and a 1950s aircraft tug. Jill has also helped at the De Havilland on an occasional basis, recently making two large banners for display at the Museum.



Tony's project this year has been putting together an exhibition to commemorate the 90th of the MacRobertson London—Melbourne Trophy Air Race (October 1934), in which the DH88 racers which completed, came first and fourth. It is a small exhibition around the plane, to celebrate the design and building of the plane, as well as the race itself.

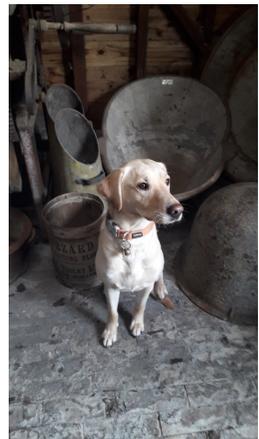


Jill is also a volunteer at the local primary school, where she maintains the archives and is currently putting together materials for the school's new reading scheme to ensure the children have the best possible learning experience. She is also a Clerk for the school's governing body and works at the local school as an exams invigilator

## **SPOTLIGHT ON VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM**

Rob Swain has been a regular visitor at the Pitstone Museum for a number of years and is always accompanied by his labrador, Bel. Rob enjoys his visits to the Museum as there is always something new to discover.

He enjoys taking pictures of Bel at the Museum, finding it amusing to photograph her with an item beginning with 'B.' Some of these have appeared on the Pitstone Facebook page. So, in keeping with his challenge at Pitstone, here we have 'Bel with a Bath.'



## UPDATE ON THE MODEL RAILWAYS

We have had a successful year running the railways, including the addition of the new outside running track with the American train, requiring a complete rearrangement of the Clarence Purton collection of model carts and carriages, This is now displayed on a suspended shelf above the completely new track layout, which gives us time to consider our next moves. There were a few minor problems on the main layout, including a leak in the millpond and a radio control failure on the big black engine.

The Dublo layout now includes a small working model showing how the mail bags were collected from moving trains. Several extra displays have been added to the room, including some mid 1960 London Transport cardboard advertising boards and maps. In addition, there is a bus driver recruitment poster from the time Dave started working as a driver on a wage just over £11 per week!

There was also a donation of a box of 1950/60s Meccano from which Dave has made up two lorries and a roundabout for display (see below). In addition was a box of 1950s model railway track, wagons and transformer/controller, which included an envelope dated 1972 from the owner's mum, advising that the mains electric wiring should be checked as it had not been used for 33 years! Over the Winter, we will make a proper display.



Dave Hale and Patrick Kerry

## MUSEUM TALKS 2024

### **Food rationing & What did I get to eat—24th October Mike Hazell**

This was the first talk of the season and a great one to start with. Mike explained how food rationing was introduced and implemented. We learnt more about wartime recipes and there was even the chance to taste savoury biscuits, jam buns and a vinegar cake, which was surprisingly delicious. (Just to clarify, the samples we ate were made just a short time before the talk, and were not relics from the 40s!)



In November we were grateful to our member Geoff Travis for stepping into the breach to talk about his often amusing time as a youth taking on responsibilities in the RAF during National Service

December's talk covered the plan to move drinking water down the canal system.

***Details of forthcoming talks can be found later in this issue.***

### **DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO WOULD 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. We would especially 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 Dave Kirkwood 07973 154170 / [manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

## 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.

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

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 2025

**All talks will be held in the Meeting Room at Pitstone.**

**Frank's Films: Thursday 23rd January 2025, 2.30 p.m.**

Vintage English documentary films from the 1930s and onwards, selected from the private archives of local film specialists, Frank Banfield and Colin Woodley.

**Pitstone - The Stone and the Pit: Thurs 27th February, 2.30 p.m.**

A talk by Tony Woodhouse of the Dunstable Town Guides, who have promoted interest in the heritage of Dunstable and the surrounding area for the past twenty years. He will relate stories of how chalk has been quarried, processed and used, as well as providing employment for the local community. Do come along and share your memories.

**Tales from the Auction Room: Thursday 27th March 2.30 p.m.**

The last of our seasons' talks is presented by Evan Williston based on his thirty years experience at Woburn Sale Room with an emphasis on the unusual and comical. Evan welcomes audience participation and items brought along for discussion, although he is unable to offer valuations. A light hearted quiz is included. Highly recommended by Ronnie Farrar,

**Please note, due to unforeseen circumstances, these may be subject to change.** We will always try to find an alternative speaker. Our talks and events cover a wide range of topics, so why not come along and support the Museum?

**PS**

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 for further details.

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



**Joint visit by Midshires & Search & Rescue and  
Search Dogs Buckinghamshire on  
17th November**

**Watch the video**

**[https://www.facebook.com/watch/?  
v=1645962479627488](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1645962479627488)**

**Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society**

**Pitstone Green Museum  
Vicarage Road  
Pitstone  
Leighton Buzzard. LU7 9EY**