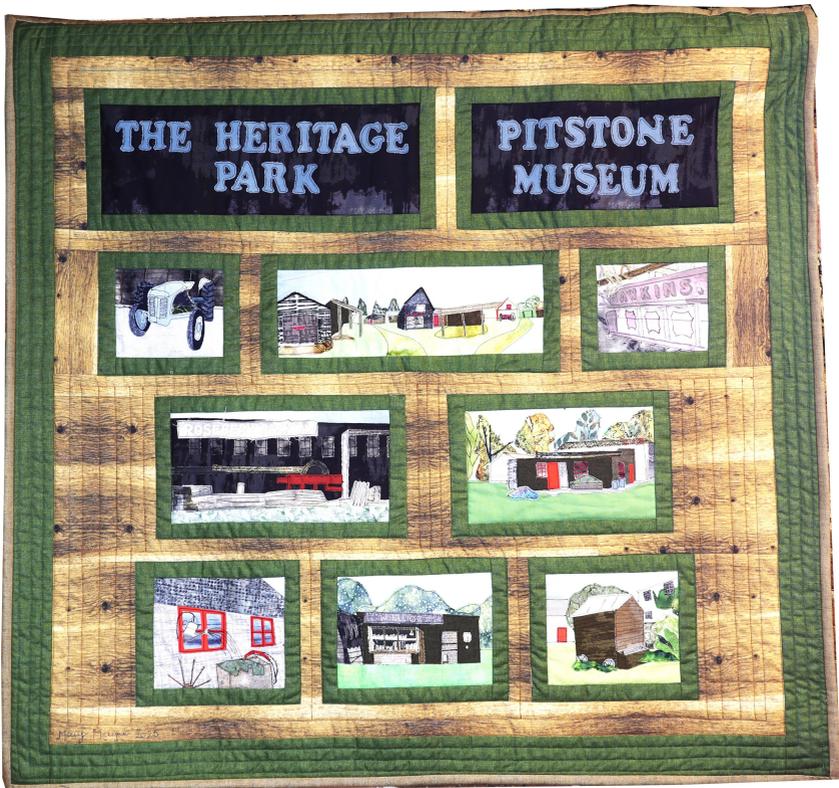




# Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



SPRING 2025

## **Executive Committee Officers**

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### **Vice Chairman**

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### **Secretary**

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### **Dancers**

Tricia Banks and David Waller

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Spring!

After the cold, wet weather we have recently had, it's lovely to see so many Spring flowers such as crocus, snowdrops and daffodils bursting through the soil to greet the sun. With the warmer days, it definitely feels more like Spring has 'sprung.'



Not long now, until our first Open Day, either. There has been a great deal of work put in by volunteers over Winter, to ensure there are new exhibits for visitors to enjoy, and you will read about some of these exciting projects in this newsletter.

On our front cover, you will see the amazing applique that Mary May has produced to celebrate Pitstone. You can learn more about her applique and quilt making in an article later in this edition.

We have had four extremely interesting talks over the Winter period and I have provided a brief resume of each one.

The first Open Day (21st April) is usually very busy and with the warmer weather, Pitstone is an ideal place to visit as there is something for everyone to enjoy. It would be lovely to see you, your friends and families at some of our Open Days this year, with all the exciting updates and changes that have been made.

Do you know anyone who would like to become a member? Benefits include the free quarterly newsletter, free entry to Open days after the first year of membership and reduced entry to our monthly talks (October to March). It is a great opportunity to meet and talk to the speakers and get to know other members and volunteers.

Details of how to join and to print of a membership form, please go to: <https://pitstonemuseum.co.uk/pims-membership-form-2025.pdf>

or contact the membership secretary:  
[membership@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:membership@pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

Lyn Asquith  
Newsletter Editor



## MANAGER'S MUSINGS

I wrote my musings in early March. We had a week of sun and what a difference it made. I doubt I am the only one to have found this winter a struggle. We sat outside for our mid morning break discussing museum projects and world events. Our mental welfare was all the better for it.

We often receive donations which our dedicated and talented volunteers enjoy bringing back to life. As mentioned, the Fergie tractor has been restored and the woodwork on the funeral bier has been replaced, to get rid of woodworm. A model of the Pitstone cement works was also given to us, which is now housed in the meeting room. This was made by a local person who worked at the cement works.

For those visiting, we try to update and change our exhibits to ensure there is always something new to see. For this year, our 1950s room has been revamped, new Stocks built, and now open for view, the grain drying area. In addition, new signs have been made for the Elliott shop and the garage. A new Tannoy system has also been installed. We have been very busy!

We are all looking forward to and planning for the start of a new season, as this is when the museum really comes alive. We are always open to comments on how we can make it better, so please let us know your thoughts.

As I mentioned earlier, it's not all about the work! Everyone is welcome. However, our Catering team in particular would be very appreciative if anyone can assist on our first Open Day, Monday 21st April, even if it is for an hour or two. As it is a Bank Holiday, it always tends to be busy. If you are able to help in this area or are interested to learn more about general volunteering at Pitstone, please contact: [manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:manager@pitstonemuseum.co.uk) or Tel: 07973 154170

We have great fun, I promise you!

Dave Kirkwood

## GREY FERGIE: NEW TO PITSTONE MUSEUM

Pitstone has had a new arrival to the Museum's tractor collection—the ubiquitous Grey Fergie. To be precise, a 1952 Ferguson TE-D 20, kindly donated by the family of Jonathon Horn.

The Grey Fergie was a very important tractor. It was the first to popularise the hydraulic three-point linkage for attaching and operating implements with the introduction of the 'Ferguson System.' Prior to this, implements, such as ploughs, were trailed and required the use of manually operated transport wheels to move them



around. The Ferguson System allowed the tractor operator to raise and lower the implement hydraulically from the driver's seat. This system continues to be used on all modern tractors and is the standard throughout the farming world.

Production ran from 1949 to 1956 with over half a million being built, in varying guises, mostly at the Standard car works in Banner Lane, Coventry. In addition, there were also production facilities overseas.

Our Fergie was in very good shape, having been the subject of a previous refurbishment by the former owner. It only required minor recommissioning, including overhaul of the braking, oil and fuel systems and the replacement of a broken exhaust manifold.

The Fergie will join the Museum's tractor display and it is the intention that it will be used on Open Days to demonstrate some of the many implements that were available to Ferguson tractor owners at the time.

Our thanks go to Pat Horne, for donating the tractor to the Museum and to Bob Sainty, for his assistance.

Jim Whinnet and Steve Patschinsky

## WINTER PROJECTS

As mentioned in 'Manager's Musings,' volunteers have been busy over winter.

### Grain blower and dryer



In what was just an old storeroom, one of the major projects has been the installation of the grain silo blower, used to dry the grain. This was one of the first such installations in the country and included an electric heater element installed on the blower outlet at the ducting inlet. You need to come and see this to appreciate all the workings.

Access is via the narrow passage between the Science Room and the Large Farm Machinery Barn.

Visitors will be able to see the new blower and the air ducting and press a button the turn the motor on.



**Heater element**

## New Signs

Winter frosts and summer sun take their toll on our signage. The new sign for Fred's Garage has been made by mounting a banner in a wooden frame. It looks very authentic with rust marks and weathering. This will be hung above the garage door on Open Days.



Likewise, the new Elliott shop sign is also hung above the shop and can be removed. This is a painted wooden sign



Before and after



## PITSTONE VOLUNTEERS:

### Mary Mayne — Patchwork & Quilter



Mary has been displaying her wonderful quilts at Pitstone for the past few years.

Her interest in quilting started as a child, as she had an old patchwork quilt on her bed, which had been made by a friend of her mother's. Although roughly made, it had always fascinated her. Despite having one or two holes in it, which she would poke her finger into, she loved it.

After Mary married, she watched a friend making a patchwork quilt and was inspired to have a go. Her hobby became a passion and before long, she was teaching patchwork and applique, all across the UK, as well as workshops in Canada and for the American Quilt Society in Paducah, Kentucky.

She is an Honorary Member of The Quilters Guild of The British Isles and has been quilting for over 60 years.

She has quilts displayed in the National Postal Museum in London and the Churchill Collection in Leicestershire. Demonstrating her skills, she has also had a book published by the American Quilters Society called 'Clever Banners, Panels & Postcards,' (no longer in print), as well as having much of her work featured in magazines.

Over the years, she has often entered her work at the annual Festival of Quilters held in Birmingham, winning many awards. After a while, she was invited to be a judge.

Her ideas come from simple things; her peg box, tomatoes, houses, photographs, it's just a matter of keeping her eyes open for inspiration. All her quilts are her own, original designs. Each piece of work can take from 3 to 9 months, depending on the complexity of the design.

She is always excited, when children take an interest in her work.

As shown on the cover of this newsletter, her latest applique, depicting aspects of the Pitstone Museum, is hanging in the Meeting Room, along with other examples of her work. Mary is often present on Open Days to share her experience.

Mary's latest applique, was inspired by her husband Peter, sleeping in the garden on a wooden bench!



## 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 available. Rolls, a wonderful range of cakes and a variety of hot and cold drinks are all available, at very reasonable prices.

## MUSEUM TALKS 2025

### **Frank's Films: Thursday 23rd January**

Colin Woodley presented vintage English documentary films from the 1930s and onwards, selected from the private archives of local film specialist, Frank Banfield. One of the films was a fascinating account of a farmer moving his entire farm machinery and livestock from Yorkshire to the south of England, using his own chartered train. Something which would be impossible to do in today's world.

### **Pitstone - The Stone and the Pit: Thursday 27th February**

Tony Woodhouse, of the Dunstable Town Guides, entertained a full house for his talk. He has promoted interest in the heritage of Dunstable and the surrounding area for the past twenty years. The talk was primarily about chalk, the different types of chalk and how it has been quarried, processed and used. Chalk in our area runs in a seam from Dorset to Norfolk which provided 'dry' paths for early civilisation. Lime and cement are also derived from chalk and the local Pitstone cement works, which was a large employer, was one of many chalk related businesses in our area.

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

The last of our seasons' talks was presented by Evan Williston based on his thirty years experience at Woburn Sale Room, owned by Charles Hanson (BBC antiques expert). Now retired, he regaled us with highly entertaining tales within the showroom and visits to look at prospective items for auction, with an emphasis on the unusual and comical. He also brought along some items for discussion. There was something for everyone during this talk.





**Restored Funeral Bier  
One of our Winter projects**

**Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society**

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