



# Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



SUMMER 2025

## **Executive Committee Officers**

### **Chairman**

Allen Fairbrother  
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### **Treasurer**

Lesley Herriott  
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### **Vice Chairman**

John Powell  
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### **Secretary**

Gill Patschinsky  
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## **Executive Committee Members**

### **Museum site Manager**

*(Position vacant)*

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Simon Heaton  
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### **Deputy Manager**

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John Youngs  
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## **Other Contacts**

### **Membership Secretary**

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### **Archivist**

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### **Craft Co-ordinators**

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### **Dancers**

Tricia Banks and David Waller

### **Newsletter Editor**

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### **Trading Secretary**

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### **PIMS Talks**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



Well, the weather has really been a mixed bag so far, but fortunately, it hasn't stopped us welcoming in so many visitors to the Museum.

Our first couple of Open Days, both on Bank Holidays, proved to be very busy. We had lots of visitors keen to see the work that had been achieved over the winter period. The café was extremely busy and the staff were fully occupied, making sandwiches and supplying the visitors with refreshments. I know how hard they all worked!

So far, our Sundays have also been very popular, with lots of families visiting, continuing to prove that there is always something for all ages!

In this Newsletter, you can learn about two more of our volunteers. Geoff Travis mans 'W Elliott's,' the shop at Pitstone and his knowledge and enthusiasm about the shop is infectious. Our second volunteer is Will Gamble who, at 15 is our youngest, and passionate about engineering.

### **Can YOU help Pitstone?**

Pitstone is currently looking for additional volunteers to support the work that makes the Museum such a great place to visit. If you enjoy chatting with people, you could shine as a tour guide or visitor ambassador. Do you have a flair for design or social media? You might want to help by spreading the Museum's message online. Good with figures? Help with our accounts. Prefer hands-on work? You could assist with exhibit installations, organising artifacts or in our café. This is an opportunity for you to use your existing skills or learn new ones in a fun and supportive environment.

Please see overleaf, for further details.

Lyn Asquith - Newsletter Editor

## PITSTONE MUSEUM NEEDS YOU!

Join us in preserving our cultural heritage and sharing it with the community. Your support is crucial in ensuring that our museum continues to thrive, educate and inspire future generations. Together, we can create a vibrant space where history and culture come alive for everyone to enjoy.



We are currently looking for people who could take on ‘understudy roles,’ to assist with both the museum’s daily operations and its objectives. This would involve shadowing experienced volunteers to share and spread the work, making roles easier to manage.

Some of the opportunities available include:

- Learning basic accounting by shadowing our treasurer during volunteer days, make petty cash payments, collecting and recording takings on Open Days.
- Examining the security of computer data and the maintenance of online artifact management records.
- Observe organisational practices, such as visitor registration, event planning, and resource allocation for educational programs.
- Involvement with technical support required for the operation of public address systems and admin of mobile radio communications.
- Understand the management of maintenance contracts for security, fire prevention and CCTV and accompanying contractors during site visits.
- Assist with secretarial responsibilities, such as scheduling meetings, preparing documentation, handling correspondence, and maintaining records.
- Gain insights into the challenges involved in managing a museum, including coordinating volunteers and complying with historical accreditation preservation standards.

Whatever your strengths, there's a role for you! Our volunteers ages range from 15 years to others in their 80's. It is a fun environment, an opportunity to make new friends and learn additional skills.

If you, or anyone you may know are interested in volunteering, would like to explore other opportunities or just like to learn more, please contact John Powell, either in person at an Open day or via email: [vicechairman@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:vicechairman@pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

## **W ELLIOTT GENERAL STORE Run by Geoff Travis — Volunteer**

W Elliott was originally the village butcher's and slaughterhouse, in Ivinghoe. When the butcher retired, the Elliotts, cousins of his, took over the premises on the corner of what we now know as the Kings Head Corner. The shop was run by the Elliotts including their daughter. She was christened Rosemary, but known as 'Jane.' The shop would provide most grocery items for the home; from sweets and Oxo cubes, to oils for wood preservation.

W Elliott (pictured here on the right) was opposite the church. In 1086, Ivinghoe had a recorded population of 38 households, putting it in the largest 20% of settlements recorded in Domesday (as mentioned in 'Open Domesday' by Anna Powell-Smith).



Jane could often be found sitting in the doorway of the shop opposite the church, watching weddings and funerals, and woe betide any customer who came in and interrupted her!

Before the shop opened, Jane would deliver the newspapers early in the morning to local residents. In keeping with the times, the shop was not open on Sundays.

When her parents passed away, she continued to run the shop on her own. One day, in the early 2000s, without explanation, she decided she'd had enough and just closed up overnight. She continued to live above the shop for a number of years, but never opened the shop again.

When she passed away, a note was found, suggesting that the Museum might like the shop and its contents. Pitstone volunteers converted The Tractor Shed to accommodate the shop and having taken photographs, ensured that they were able to build an exact replica of 'Elliott's.' This included all the fixtures and fittings, which are in their original locations (with the exception of the biscuit unit). Jane never had a till, as the money was always placed in a drawer behind a screen. Therefore, the ornate till in the shop today is not part of the original fixtures.

Since the shop opened at Pitstone, many additional items have been donated. It is interesting to note how the packaging and logos of many products have changed over the years and equally how some have largely stayed the same, as shown here, with 'OXO'. Many of the items on display are still full of their original product.

Geoff Travis' introduction to Pitstone Museum was way back in the 1980s. His late wife Hazel had, with Margaret Horn, (both lacemakers), helped clear and set themselves up in an old caravan donated to the museum. From there, they would demonstrate lacemaking. Geoff started assisting with odd jobs on open days, when he brought his wife down. Geoff initially assisted Brian in the shop and when Brian was no longer able to run it about 6 years ago, he took over.



Geoff was, for 38 years, a uniformed Officer of Customs and Excise, initially on the customs side, dealing with Ships, Aircraft, vehicles and their passengers and crew arriving in the UK from overseas.

This included searching for smuggled goods and prosecuting or fining, as appropriate. After 18 years, he moved into Excise Controls, becoming an acknowledged expert on all the controls and revenue collection relating to Hydrocarbon Oils duty. He had responsibility for the Buncefield complex (prior to its fire (the largest in Europe since WWII). When the method of collecting the excise duty was changed, he was involved in that process, taking over responsibility for the BP Oils head office in Hemel Hempstead. He was a Lecturer on the subject and also updated parts of the new control instructions.

Geoff's main hobby is 'n' gauge model railways. He has a quite large layout at home and is a member of the Tring & District MRC. He is also a speaker, offering talks on his time in Customs and Excise and also as a National Serviceman in the RAF. The fees from these talks go to the Filey Branch of the RNLI - the town he was brought up in and where his parents lived for almost 60 years.

He enjoys meeting visitors and is happy to regale them with stories of specific items. Visitors enjoy reminiscing about many of the products they remember from childhood or younger days, including books of Green Shield Stamps!

Geoff is usually assisted by Rosalyn on open days. If you are visiting Pitstone, make sure you pop in and see them, to learn more about the wide variety of fascinating items in this wonderful shop.



## **PITSTONE VOLUNTEERS:**

### **William Gamble**

William, at 15 years old, is our youngest volunteer. His grandad, Lionel, came to Pitstone to volunteer, and from an early age, William was keen to join him.

He can now be found on open days and any school holidays, maintaining the mowers and anything else he can lay his hands on!

His interests lie with engineering and mechanics, and in addition to his school studies, he is also undertaking a part-time City and Guilds in Mechanical Engineering at college.

One of his major interests has been the restoration of his own Morris Minor. This car was transported back to the UK from Australia and surprisingly, had only 24,000 miles on the clock and the original tyres from 73 years ago!



Having undertaken the repairs to make it roadworthy, William now takes it to car shows, Brooklands Museum and of course, Pitstone.

Keeping with his interests in all things mechanical and car related, he also competes in car trials all over the country and is supported by his father and grandad.

He says he enjoys coming to Pitstone because it gives him the opportunity to work on bigger and older machinery that he wouldn't normally be exposed to. He also enjoys the independence, fun and camaraderie of the museum and the chance to mix with a variety of different people.

He would encourage others of any age to come along and volunteer and experience the fun of working at Pitstone.



## WARTIME RECYCLING, RATIONING AND MUSIC

With VE Day still on our minds, the Museum was fortunate to have Michael Hazell, Jenny and Peter Copeland at the last Bank Holiday open day in May, discussing recycling during the war. Jenny invited those present, to enjoy some carrot jam, made using a War time recipe. Michael explained how and which items were recycled, including hot water bottles, glass and interestingly, railway tickets, which were pulped and made into gun cartridge cases.



**Michael Hazell and Jenny Copeland**

Peter demonstrated the musical offerings of the period. It was interesting to see some of the children's reactions to the old fashioned records and record players that were used in days gone by, so different from the use of 'i-tunes' or wireless music systems we are familiar with today! He also had home guard telephone communication equipment which he demonstrated.



**Peter Copeland**

## OPEN DAYS 2025

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.

### ANTIQUES EVENING TALK

We have another entertaining Antiques evening with Stephen Hearn at the Pitstone Museum on Thursday, 24th July, starting at 6:30 pm. Please feel free to bring along one of your heirlooms to be valued.

Refreshments are included (cheese, pâté, and soft drinks) in the price of £8 for members and £10 for non-members. If you would like to attend, a booking form was sent out by email on 5th June and should be returned to Lesley Herriott, PIMS Treasurer, Pitstone Green Museum, Vicarage Road, Pitstone, Bucks, LU7 9EY. If you require another copy, please contact Lesley: [treasurer@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

Payment can be made by cheque or bank transfer (information is on the booking form).



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**Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society**

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