



# Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society Newsletter



## WINTER 2025

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### **Vice Chairman**

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### **Secretary**

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For further information please see the website: [www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk](http://www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

The Pitstone & Ivinghoe Museum Society, registered charity No. 273931

## EDITOR'S NOTE

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



2025 was a very busy year for Pitstone and with excellent summer weather, we had a large number of visitors.

On the last open day, we had a visit from a Jaguar car club as well as a private tour later in the month by a local U3A group.

Even though open days came to an end in October, our volunteers know only too well, it is not the end of work at the Museum. During these cold, winter months, they have been hard at it and continue doing so, making, mending and coming up with new displays, ready for our open days in 2026.

Over the winter season, there are still opportunities for you to enjoy Pitstone. We have an afternoon of film and also a variety of talks. These are always very interesting and worth attending

Details of open days and all our talks can be found later in the newsletter.

The Blacksmiths forge is our cover picture. Learn more about Lee and Mac who demonstrate their skills in the 'smithy'.

### **Would you like to be part of our Pitstone Museum community?**

Pitstone relies on volunteers to make the Museum such a great place to visit. We are always looking for additional support, especially on open days. From helping in our café area, to assisting with exhibition installations, there really is an opportunity for everyone to get involved. You can use existing skills or learn new ones in a fun and supportive environment.

For further information, please contact: John Powell,  
email: [vicechairman@pitstonemuseum.co.uk](mailto:vicechairman@pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

Lyn Asquith - Newsletter Editor

# PITSTONE VISITORS

## JAGUAR ENTHUSIASTS CLUB

### London - North West and West Region

The Jaguar Club visited Pitstone the last Open Day in October. They had been keen to come last year, but due to other commitments, this was not possible.

The Club meet once a month in Pinner. They were the third region in the country to be formed and in 2025, they celebrated their 40th anniversary. It is an active club, which attends a wide variety of events, including a trip this year to the Isle of Wight for a Classic Car Weekend.



#### Left to Right:

XJ 350 3L,

XK8 Convertible 4.2L,

Daimler Sovereign (1969) 4.2L

Series 3 E-Type V12 engine, 5.3L(last one made)

Navy E-Type Series 1 4.2L



**On the same day**, these superb classics attended.

#### Left

1935 Morris 8

#### Right

1935 Austin 12 Ascot

## FODEN

The Museum is often visited by Kevin Edwins, who brings along his replica 6-ton Foden. This miniature is 6" scale, half full size. He had a smaller scale version before, but was keen to build a larger one. It took 5½ years to build and was completed in 2004. Kevin regularly takes it to various shows and events.



## Pitstone additional opening days for groups

Were you aware that the Museum can be opened at other times (usually a Tuesday or Thursday) for school parties and adult group visits by prior arrangement? This is subject to a small charge. 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.

## THE BLACKSMITHS FORGE

The Blacksmiths forge is one of the oldest buildings on the site, dating back to mid-17th century. It was originally a pigsty! There wasn't a blacksmiths forge at Pitstone, as it was serviced by George Moore, who had a forge at the back of the orchard. The forge would typically be used to make and repair tools, horseshoes and anything else used on the farm.

Traditionally there are two types of bellows, which are both evident at the museum; hand and foot operated. The oldest on site is a hand cranked bellow, which is dated 1881. Foot bellows were easier to use, especially if the blacksmith was working on his own, as it allowed him to have both hands free.

A blacksmith would often have one or more apprentices. They would spend many years becoming technically competent and then, more often than not, become a 'Journeyman,' travelling to other blacksmiths to learn different skills, before eventually settling and becoming a 'Master.' There weren't books describing how to repair or make items, so if a blacksmith hadn't come across how to make something before, it would be a case of learning by trial and error.

Different steel is used dependent upon the item being crafted; wrought iron for gates or railings which need to have corrosion resistance, and carbon steels for tools such as spanners, files or knives, which aren't as malleable. Typically the temperature of the fire is between 1,000-1,300°C and the work needs to be completed quickly. This is because steel rapidly cools and can only be bent in its malleable state. People are often surprised that the outer area of the forge is not hot, it is only the central core which generates the high temperatures needed. Originally, charcoal would be used, but these days it is coke.

Rivet forges were required at dockyards and there are tales of the Blacksmiths making the rivets on the forge, then throwing the red hot rivets to other dock workers who would catch them with their tongs!

Currently, Lee and Mac are our resident Blacksmiths. Lee's interest in Pitstone started ten years ago, when he visited the Museum with 'The Chiltern Bodgers,' a green wood working group (using wood cut straight from the tree, rather than seasoned). He had basic tool making experience and was disappointed to discover there was a blacksmiths display at Pitstone but a forge wasn't being demonstrated to the public.

Lee knew Mac from the Association of Pole-lathe Turners and suggested he might like to volunteer at Pitstone. Mac has now been with Pitstone for four years.

Lee says he enjoys being able to manipulate steel into various shapes to suit specific purposes and the problem solving challenges that often arise in the process.

Mac describes blacksmithing as 'playdoh for adults!' He says 'you get all the joy of manipulating a fantastic material into useful and decorative items.'

You can see both gentlemen giving demonstrations on Open Days, typically producing hooks and beautiful leaf pendants, which they also sell to the general public.



**Mac**

**Lee**

## THE 1940'S ROOM

Roy Cutler has been an active member at Pitstone Museum for 37 years, initially using his experience of bricklaying.

Over the years, having a love of the 40s period, Roy built up a fascinating collection of personal items and war time memorabilia which is now housed at Pitstone. He has continued to add to this, by visiting car boots and collectors fairs.

The 1940s Room was initially housed in the Old Barn and around 2009, the exhibits were moved to their current location, allowing Roy to expand the collection. He helped to replace much of the structure of the area, to make sure it was watertight and this included new walls being erected, as well as installing the fireplace (as shown in the right of the picture below).

During his youth, Roy lived by the river in Redbourn where his nan's dog regularly used to paddle.



There are so many items on display which are very personal to Roy. These include a little outfit his mother made for him, his mother and father's wedding photo, pictures of Roy as a baby and his birth weight record.



One of the more unusual items (left), is a pan for warming up milk. Water is put into the top and milk in the actual pan. When the pan starts to whistle, the milk is ready.

It is hard to believe how different home life was in the 1940's, compared to all the modern products we use today.



Roy has enjoyed witnessing children and young people coming into the room, enthralled to see how different life was during that time. Older generations reminisce about items they recognise from their parents/grandparents homes. Roy also likes to see the children's expressions when he 'puts the 1940s radio on,' as it lights up and 1940s music is played (cleverly achieved with a hidden CD player).

It is a fascinating area to visit because there is so much to take in and looking at the variety of exhibits, you can always find something that you hadn't noticed before.



## **FILMS**

**Thursday 22nd January at 2.30 p.m.**

**Colin Woodley presents vintage films**

Vintage films selected from Colin's archive, possibly including an American view of quirky Buckinghamshire, Aldbury school pupils talking in the early 1960s, a Massey Ferguson tractor sales pitch, Frank Banfield's own view of Pitstone in 1963.

## **TALKS**

**Thursday 26th February at 2.30 p.m.**

**Denis Myers - The Pinkerton's Detective Agency**

Denis' talk covers wartime experiences from his career as a detective and the history of the Pinkerton's Agency, from 1850 onwards. Denis more recently worked for the Independent Police Complaints Commission, now called the Independent Office of Police Complaints, covering England and Wales.

**Thursday 26th March at 2.30 p.m.**

**Mick Jones - 'Dancersend, 100 years of nature conservation'**

Mick has been a Volunteer Warden at Dancersend near Tring for many years and gave his last talk at the Museum ten years ago. The Reserve is one of the first in the UK. It was set up and supported by the Rothschilds adjacent to the site of their waterworks, which supplied drinking water to many local homes and St. Johns Hospital, Aylesbury. The story of the nature rich woods and chalkland is told by ever enthusiastic Mick.

**Thursday 23rd July 2026**

**Steven Hearne - Antiques** Details to follow

All of the above will be held in the Meeting Room  
£2 members, £3 visitors including tea, coffee & biscuits.

## **OPEN DAYS 2026 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.**

6th April	Easter Monday
4th May	Early May bank holiday Monday
25th May	Spring bank holiday Monday
14th June	Sunday
12th July	Sunday
9th August	Sunday
31st August	Summer Bank Holiday Monday
13th September	Sunday
11th October	Sunday

### **Information for visiting Historic Vehicles in 2026**

We are delighted to welcome Historic cars to the Museum on open days. We would appreciate vehicles to arrive prior to 11:00 a.m. and stay until 4:00 p.m. In recognition of this request we will grant free museum entrance to the driver and one passenger as our guests. Additional passengers to pay normal entry fee. Owners will be supplied with a Historic Vehicle Parking Pass on first visit to simplify future entry

Traction Engine or Steam Roller please feel free to arrive and depart when convenient.

To qualify for a free entry grant to the museum on open days, from 2026, vehicles must conform to the following requirements:

Pre-arranged Club/Group Visit. Clubs or groups of historic, classic, marque or special interest vehicles Free for driver and + 1 passenger, additional passengers to pay normal entry fee. A one-day parking pass will be issued to club/group organisers by email to circulate to their members – this pass must be displayed on entry.

All motorcycles. Free for rider +1 passenger. Additional passengers to pay normal entry fee.

Historic Vehicles-To qualify for free entry the vehicles must meet the Government eligibility criteria to be registered as a Historic Vehicle i.e: the vehicle was built or first registered more than 40 years ago. No 'substantial changes' have been made to the vehicle in the last 30 years, for example replacing the chassis, body, axles or engine to change the way the vehicle works.



The Shepherd's Hut  
with its new coat of paint



**Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society**

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