



# The Parish of Pitstone



## The Heritage Centre, Pitstone Green Museum

Housed in the ancient buildings of a Victorian farm, owned by the National Trust, it is run by volunteers of the Pitstone & Ivinghoe Museum Society as a registered charity. It has an enormous collection of artefacts from all aspects of life in the region, from household and farming, to model railways and a Lancaster Bomber cockpit, which provides interest for all the family, come rain or shine. See the website: [www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk](http://www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk) for details of opening times. Volunteers of all abilities always welcome.



## Pitstone Memorial Hall

The first Memorial Hall was erected by public subscription in 1923 in honour of those who fell in the First World War. Four cottages now stand on that site, across the road from the recreation ground on Vicarage Road. As a cricket pavilion it must have been a little inconvenient. The present hall was opened in 1974 and has been expanded to meet the growing needs of the community. A commemorative plaque inside remembers those that fell during both World Wars.



## Castlemead and the Local Wildlife Site

The new housing estate stands on the site of the cement works which flourished between 1939 and 1991, casting a pall of dust over the village. Links between the new and old parts of the village will once again alter the village centre from the Marsworth Road to the Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground.



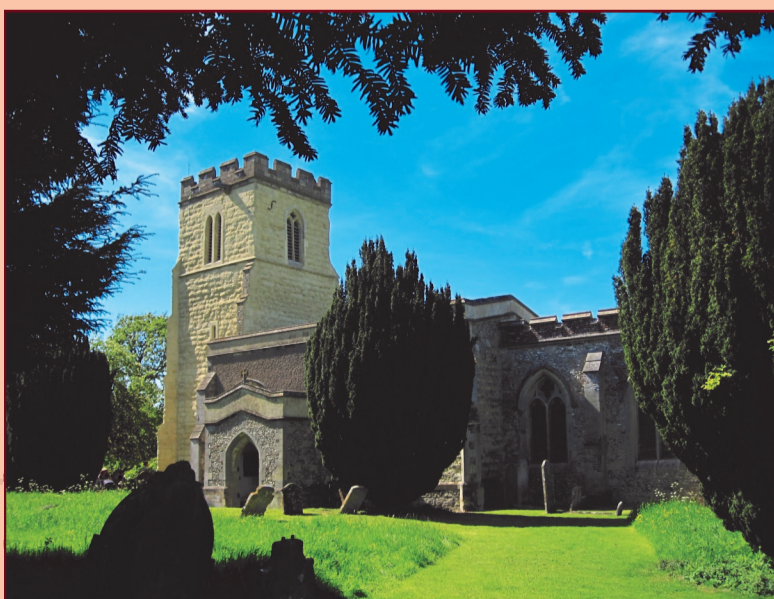
The old quarry site at the end of the housing estate is now a flourishing Local Wildlife Site and wildflower meadow, home to some rare flora and fauna including orchids and small blue butterflies, and is one of the most important sites for nature in the county.

## St Mary's Church, Pitstone

St Mary's dates back to Norman times though only the font remains from the original church. Most of the building is 13th Century, including the patterned tiles on the chancel floor. The tower is two centuries younger. Furnishings include a mediaeval chest and a carved Jacobean pulpit. A small brass dug up in the graveyard and displayed in the church is thought to be one of the oldest recorded depicting a woman.

The church was originally the centre of Pitstone, with a manor house in the adjoining field which was deserted during the Black Death.

The Churches Conservation Trust ensure that the church remains in good condition. A Festival of Art, Craft and Flowers is held at the end of May and the church is open on Sunday afternoons from May to September.



For further information, please email: [smartypitstone@gmail.com](mailto:smartypitstone@gmail.com).



## Pitstone Fen Nature Reserve

A protected site and wonderful haven for orchids, butterflies and dragonflies managed by the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust as part of the College Lake Nature Reserve. To take part in a guided walk or find out more about the site please call into the College Lake visitor centre or visit [www.bbowt.org.uk](http://www.bbowt.org.uk).

## History

In ancient times, herds of red deer, giant deer and oxen roamed the parish along with hippopotamus, rhinoceros and mammoth. You can see their fossilised bones in the College Lake visitor centre and the Aylesbury Museum, having been uncovered during excavation for cement production at Quarry 3, which is now College Lake.

Pitstone (originally Pightlesthorpe) has a fascinating history dating back to the 6th Century, and both Iron Age and Roman materials have been found locally indicating that the area was extensively inhabited. Several moated sites and Scheduled Ancient Monuments have been identified in the area.

Historically a farming community with local plums known as the Aylesbury Prune, cereals, sheep and Aylesbury Ducks all very important. The village was the site of several plait schools and was an important supplier of straw plait to the Luton hat industry. In the 1930's The Tunnel Portland Cement Company Ltd opened the Pitstone cement works which dominated the village until 1991.

To discover more about our heritage, please visit the website [www.pitstone.co.uk](http://www.pitstone.co.uk) or request your free copy of our Pitstone 2000 colour book from the parish clerk by emailing: [parishclerk@pitstone.co.uk](mailto:parishclerk@pitstone.co.uk).



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## Local Walks

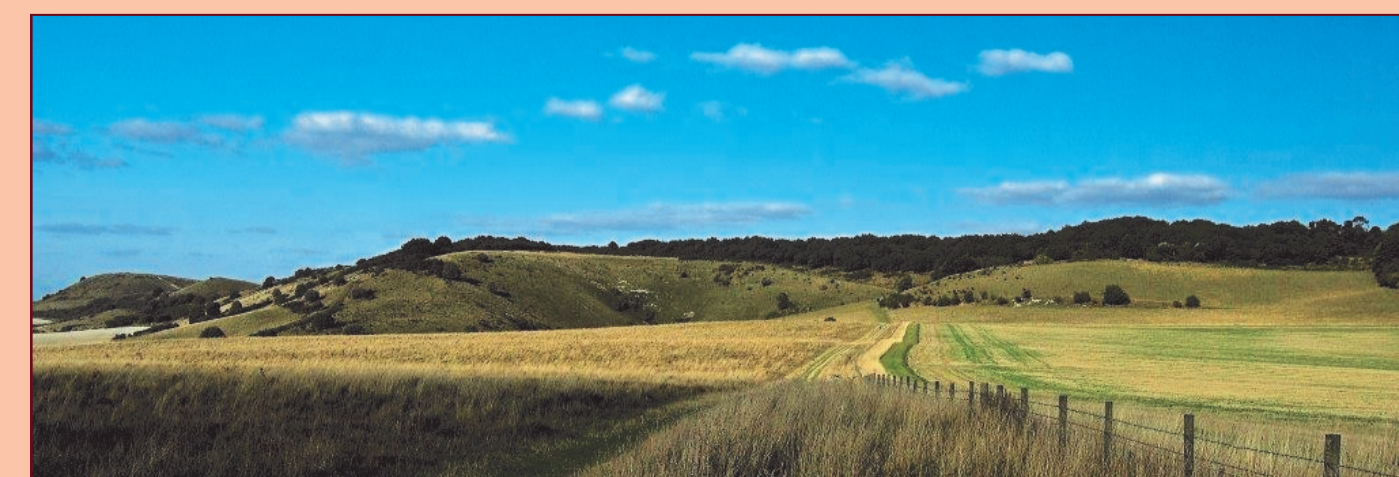
The Parish Council have three excellent walks published on the web site and available to download direct to your smart phone using the QR codes below:

The Pitstone Hill walk is about 3.5 miles long and takes you from the centre of the village, by the allotments, in a circular walk up to the Hill and back.

The Walk to the Monument is under 4 miles, with a fair amount of uphill work on the way there, taking you from the village centre up to the Bridgewater Monument in the Ashridge Estate.

There is also a 5.5 mile circular walk which will take you out to Bulbourne then Marsworth and back.

**"Leave only footprints, take only photographs."**



## Brook End Mill (Pitstone's Watermill) and the arrival of Marsworth Road

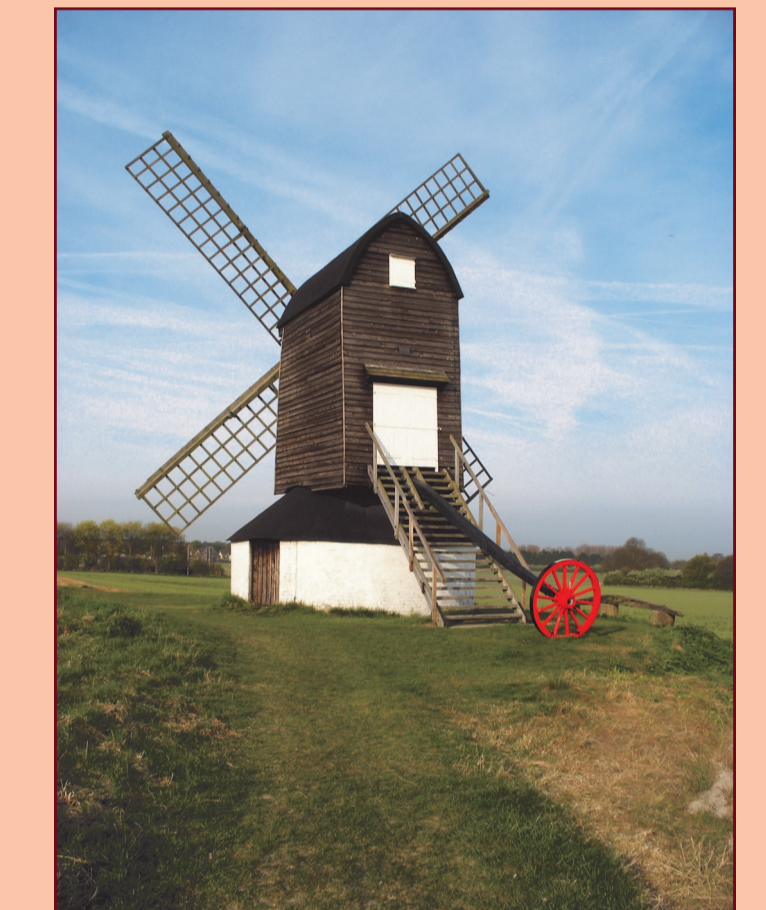
Brook End Mill straddles Pitstone and Ivinghoe as the Whistle Brook demarking the boundary runs underneath the property to drive the water wheel. Most of the current building structure was built in 1866 on the site of a pre-existing ancient mill likely to date from before 1215 as the Bishop of Winchester then bestowed the mill on Ralph of Ivinghoe, then Chancellor of St Pauls Cathedral. In 1530 the mill was held on behalf of King Henry VIII by William Cowper. The water mill was connected by a 'good road' called Mill Way (now Orchard Way) to Pitstone Windmill, and both mills were often worked by the same owner in the past. In 1990 the mill was converted to a private residence (not open to the public). You can read the full history of the mill on the web site, or by using this QR code:



Converted into an Indian Restaurant in 2013, The Haldi (previously the Bell public house) sits on the spot where two old roads met on their way to Ivinghoe. In 1849 a new road, the Marsworth Road, was built making a direct link between Marsworth and Ivinghoe, altering the balance of Pitstone (which had historically been centred around Pitstone Church). Now this forms one of the main areas of Pitstone with houses stretching all down and behind Marsworth Road and along Cheddington Road in an area known as Pitstone Green.

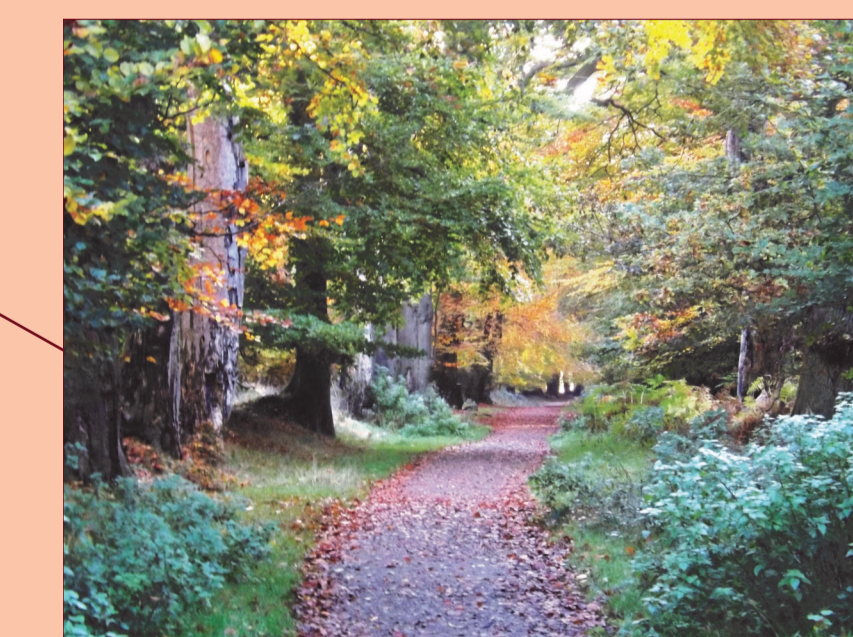
## Pitstone Windmill

Pitstone Windmill is well placed to catch the wind from the Chilterns. It is a post mill of a very early type, 1637 being the earliest date carved in the building. It was probably working before then. Material covered sails, rather than elaborate shuttering, were turned into the wind by a simple tail-pole attached to a cartwheel. The mill was fully restored by local enthusiasts and now belongs to The National Trust. It is open to the public on Sunday afternoons during the summertime. For further information, please visit [www.nationaltrust.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.co.uk).



## Pitstone Hill, The Ridgeway National Trail

The Ridgeway National Trail ends on nearby Ivinghoe Beacon and the Pitstone stretch must be one of the more spectacular. The path along the hilltop has views over Aylesbury Vale and South Bedfordshire. There are signs of prehistoric occupation nearby and much of the ancient chalk downland is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The hill, known locally as Piccadilly, is a popular place for walking and tobogganing in the winter. The car park has a large picnic area and it is a short walk to Ivinghoe Beacon. More information on the area is given on a board near the car park. See below for more information on an easy walk up to the Piccadilly.



## Ashridge Estate

The Parish of Pitstone stretches right up into the Ashridge Estate, a 2,000 hectare area of the Chilterns Hills in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and includes one of the few Special Areas of Conservation in the country. The estate has beech and oak woodlands, commons and chalk downlands. These very different landscapes each support a rich variety of wildlife, including carpets of bluebells in spring, rare butterflies in summer and the fallow deer rut in autumn.

The best way to explore the Ashridge Estate is on foot, by bicycle or on horseback. Miles of footpaths and bridleways (there is a 17 mile boundary trail) give you plenty of space to explore. You can call into the visitor centre for leaflets showing the best walks and there are mobility scooters available if you can't explore under your own steam. Find out more by visiting [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ashridge-estate/](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ashridge-estate/)