

A POTTED HISTORY OF GALLEYWOOD



**Suggested donation
£1**

**In aid of the Galleywood Heritage Centre
[Charity no: 1128416]**

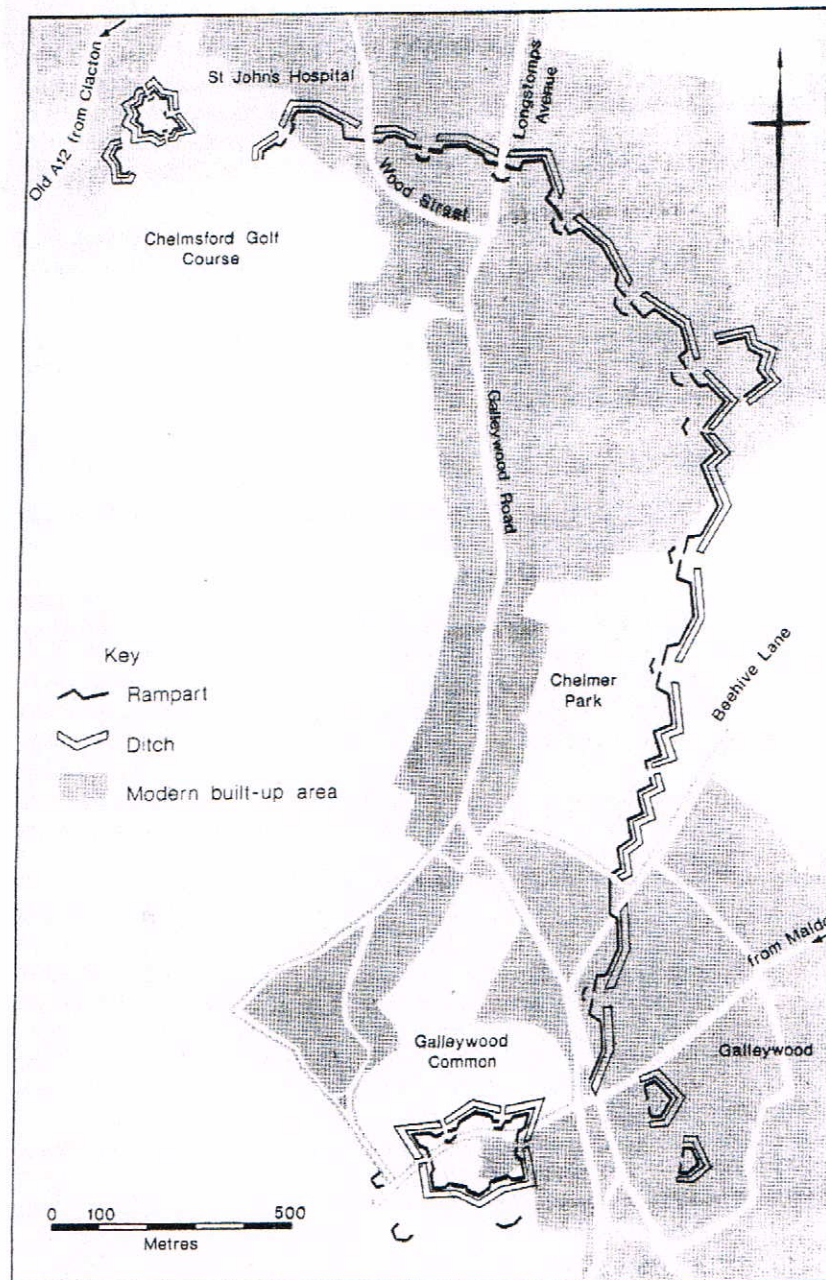
Wendy Cummin 2012

A short history of Galleywood

During the Napoleonic Wars of 1799-1815 there were fears that Napoleon might invade England, and various defences were constructed.

In 1803, one of these defences was constructed in Galleywood, which held a strategic position on the Maldon to London road, one of the possible routes which Napoleon's men may have taken.

Entrenchments made of earth and wood ran from a Star Fort at Widford to another Star Fort on Galleywood Common.



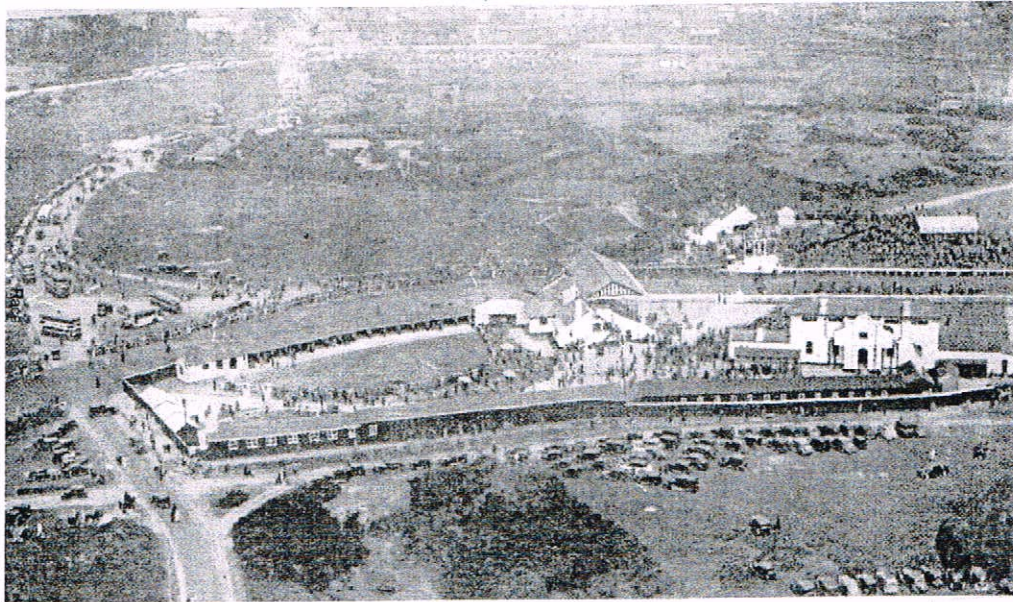
Napoleonic Earthworks. © Crown Copyright RCHME

The feared invasion never came and the earthworks were never used. Only fragments remain, some of them acting as natural hazards on the golf-course at Widford.

The Battle of Waterloo in 1815 marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

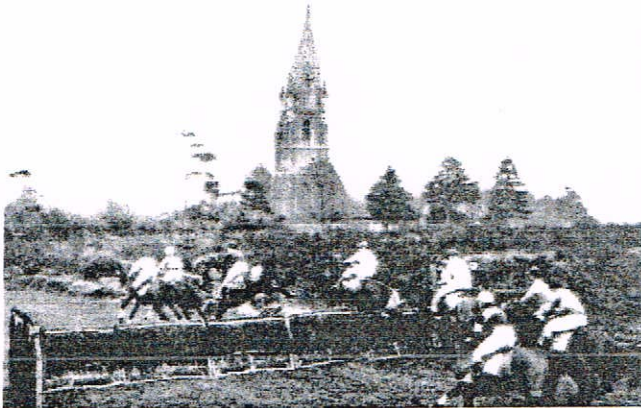
Galleywood Racecourse

This was one of the oldest in England, probably dating back to the days of Charles II.



Race meeting in the early 1930s

When Galleywood Church was built in 1873, encircled by the course, it was the only church in the country built in the middle of a racecourse.



Steeple chasing around the church steeple



Race meetings were very popular and successful but ran at a loss as large crowds watched for free as the photo opposite the Eagle pub shows.

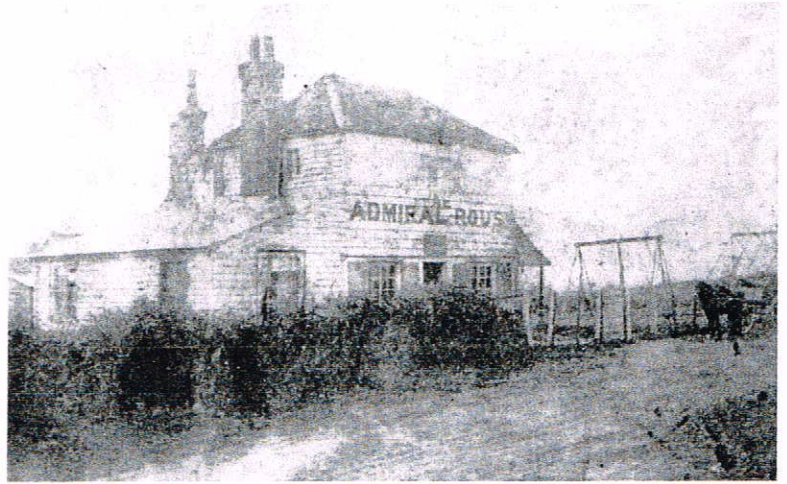
* This photo was taken in the 1930's. The child in the pram is Ron Eve, born 1926, who still lives in Well Lane in 2011.

Some sections of the white posts and rails have been preserved as a reminder of our heritage.

The grandstand of the racecourse is very relevant to our story as the relic of the grandstand has now become our Heritage Centre.

One of the most famous supporters of Galleywood racecourse was Admiral Henry John Rous who was First Lord of the Admiralty in 1846.

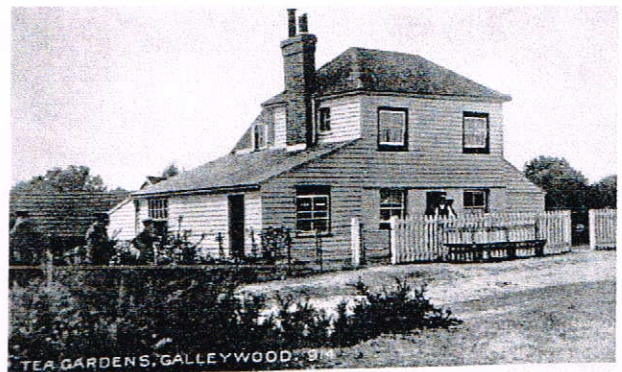
The "Admiral Rous" Inn was built on the Common in the late 1860's and named in his honour.



The Admiral Rous Inn achieved notoriety in 1899 when it was the scene of a murder.

Samuel Crozier became the publican in June 1899, but later in the same year he was found guilty of murdering his wife Cecilia Jane Savage. He was hanged in December 1899 at Springfield jail.

The Admiral Rous later became a tea-room.



It is now a private house called Rous Cottage.



St Michael's and all Angels Church



The church was built in 1873, paid for by Squire Arthur Pryor of Hylands House. It is believed to be the only church to be built within a racecourse.

Before this date, parishioners had only the small Methodist Church in Well Lane, and a small chapel-of-ease in the old school building by the Eagle crossroads, now the Youth Centre, and so they would have been baptised, married and buried in any of the neighbouring parishes.

The ecclesiastical parish of Galleywood was formed in 1874, defined by 10 boundary stones which still exist and have been identified.

However, Galleywood remained part of Great Baddow civil parish until 1987.

The first vicar of St Michael's was Reverend Hirzel Carey de Lisle who came from an influential Guernsey family. He remained until 1907 when he retired to Guernsey.

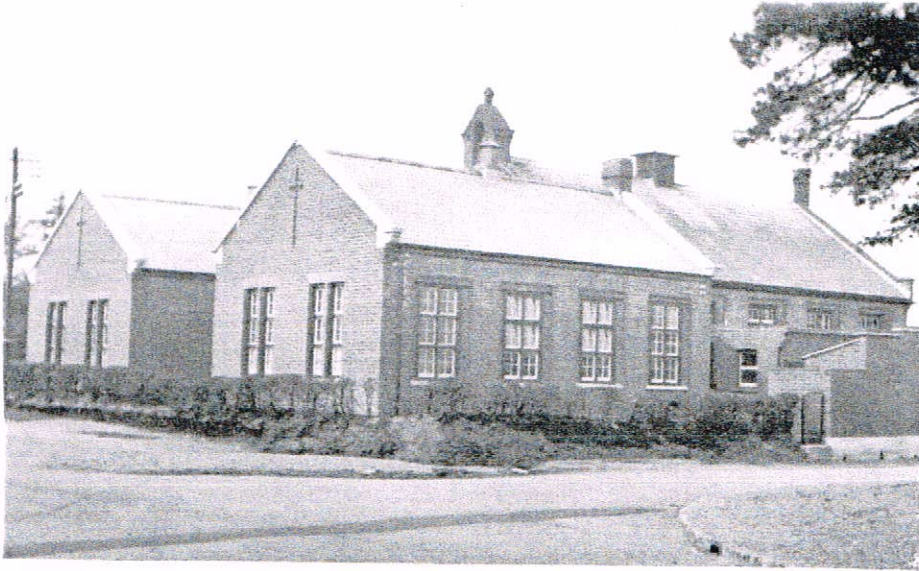
Rev. de Lisle and his wife Jane Harriette had six children.

Sadly 3 of his sons died in drowning accidents.

Two of them are buried in the churchyard, and there is a memorial plaque inside the church.



The Old School



The school was built in 1838. Education was not free; it cost a penny a week for each child.

There was no water supply until 1908 when a well was sunk. The pump from this well now stands in the grounds of the Keene Hall.

The first head teacher was Miss Grutchfield who lived in a small cottage next to the school.

By 1912, Miss Taylor was headmistress [shown left of picture].
The other teacher at that time was Miss Birch.

The cottage has since been demolished.



John Walter Smith became headmaster in 1928 and remained until he retired in 1954.

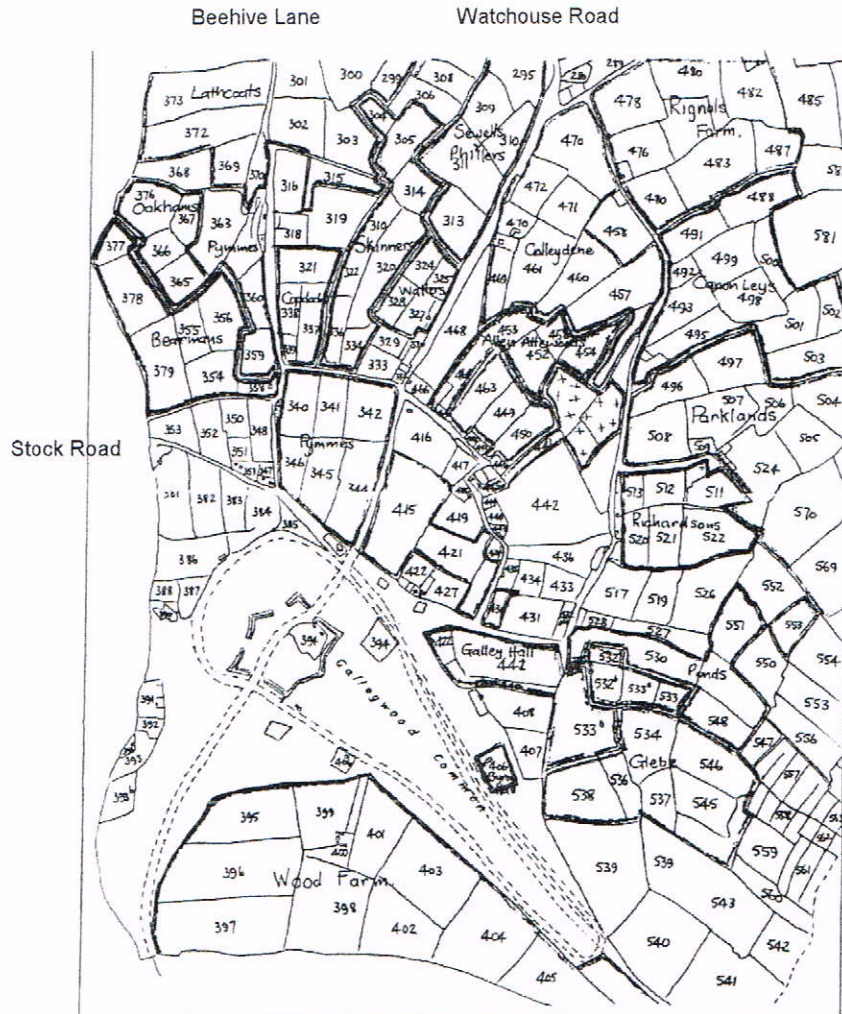
When he arrived, the school had just two classrooms and two assistant teachers for about 150 children.
Two new classrooms were added in 1935 due to the generosity of Mrs Lavinia Keene.

In 1943, the older children were moved to Moulsham School and in 1966 the infants were moved to the new school in Barnard Road.



Galleywood's Farming Heritage

In bygone days, Galleywood was almost exclusively a farming area. The tithe map of 1838 identifies about 20 farms, although most were fairly small. The vast majority of the population worked in agriculture-related occupations.



TITHE AWARD 1838 SHOWING FARMS IN GALLEYWOOD

So what happened to all these farms?

Oakhams and Bearmans are now playing fields.

Pymmes Farm is now an area of shops, houses and Cottey House.

Galley Hall was demolished in the 1970's and is now the housing development known as The Paddocks.

Canon Leys, once farmed by the Chaplin family, is now owned by the Whybro family and is farmed with Parklands Farm.

Parklands Farm absorbed parts of Richardsons and Pond Farm and has been run by the Howard family for over 100 years.

Lathcoats Farm is still a fruit farm and also a farm shop, run by the Taylor family since 1912.

Keene Hall

The Keene Hall was built in 1937 and left in trust to the parishioners of Galleywood by the wealthy Mrs Lavinia Clarissa Keene.



Mrs Keene was the widow of John Henry Keene, a director of Pearl Life Assurance and Investment Company which was founded in 1864 in Stepney by seven local businessmen including John Keene, father of John Henry.

John Henry and Lavinia Keene were both born in Stepney, but they moved to Galleywood in 1901 and lived at Carlton House in Beehive Lane.

John Henry was a generous benefactor, and after his death in 1931 his widow was even more generous in her donations to many charities and churches both locally and elsewhere.

Galleywood benefitted from her generosity in many ways, including the addition of new school classrooms, and electric lighting in St Michael's Church, as well as the Keene Hall itself.

Sadly we have no photo of Lavinia, who died in 1949, and the couple had no children.

The Lodge Room in the Keene Hall is named after Alfred William Lodge.

Born in Well Lane in 1898, Alfred lost a leg in 1918 after surviving battles on the Somme and at Ypres.

Despite this, he was actively involved with virtually all Galleywood activities for the rest of his life and in recognition of his contribution to the local community, the Lodge Room was named after him. He was married for 55 years and had 3 sons. He died in 1979.



There is also a small room named after Ron White.

Ron amassed a vast archive of local photographs and his collection is now held by Galleywood Parish Council and is lodged in the Heritage Centre.



picture by Jane Head

Addendum to page 7

We do now have a photo of Mrs Lavinia Keene



This was taken at the opening of the Keene Memorial Homes
in Broomfield in 1933

Galleywood Golf Course

A nine-hole golf course was constructed on Galleywood Common in 1893. All the hazards were natural, some being the remains of the entrenchments of the Napoleonic Defences.

The course began and ended at the Horse and Groom pub, and a small clubhouse was built on the side of the pub.



Chelmsford Golf Club played on this course until 1912 when they moved to Widford, after which time the course on the Common was made redundant.

The golf professional at the course between 1907 and 1917 was Robert Walter Finch.

Robert Walter Finch was conscripted into the Essex Regiment during WW1.

He died of wounds received at the Battle of Monchy-le-Preux, near Arras, on 17th April 1917.

He left a wife and two children.

Robert Walter Finch is one of the names to be inscribed on the new War Memorial.



This booklet is simply an introduction to the rich history of Galleywood.

The archives held in the Heritage Room of the Galleywood Heritage Centre offer an enormous amount of information and photos relating to these topics, and many others.

There is information on, and photos of, many old local families, information on the origin of parish councils, the casualties and survivors of war, and transcriptions of births and burials at St Michael's Church.

There is a history of Reverend de Lisle, the first vicar of Galleywood, and there is a collection of scrapbooks relating to the carnival.

There are the archives of the Women's British Legion, the Methodist Chapel, and the Keene Players; a wide range of topics for exploring.

Come and explore!

The archives are available in the Heritage Room on Tuesdays 1.30-3.30 and Sundays 11.00-1.00, when the tearoom is also open for tea and home-made cakes.

The archives may also be accessible at other times by arrangement.

Contact Wendy Cummin on wendy.gf@blueyonder.co.uk

Or contact the Heritage Centre on 01245 357700