

## I never knew that about Essex

JUST OFF THE HIGH STREET in Chipping Ongar can be found the small Catholic church of St Helen's, which has a stained-glass window, known as 'the *Titanic* window', and it is a memorial to Father Thomas R.D. Byles, who lost his life in the tragic sinking of the RMS *Titanic* in April 1912.

Father Byles arrived as the minister at St Helen's in 1905 and early in 1912 he accepted an invitation to officiate at the wedding of his younger brother in New York, hence the reason for him being a passenger on the fateful voyage. On the morning of Sunday 14th April 1912, the day the *Titanic* struck the iceberg Father Byles celebrated mass on board, later that day when the vessel began to sink, he twice adamantly refused a place on one of the lifeboats and when all the lifeboats had left the stricken vessel, he heard confessions and gave absolutions to over one hundred passengers who were trapped in the stern of the vessel. His body, if recovered, was never identified and he is now considered one of the *Titanic* heroes. He has been portrayed in the several films on the tragic event, perhaps most notably by James Lancaster in the celebrated 1997 film.



There is another Essex link to the *Titanic*. The hymn, '*Nearer, my God to Thee*', which was reputed to have been played by the orchestra as the ship was sinking, was written by an Essex lady, Sarah Flower Adams of Harlow, and the music was composed by her sister, Eliza.

## News from the Heritage Centre

THE SPECIAL DISPLAY in the Heritage Room is 'The Home Front' and it will continue through November and December. There are also plans for a regular 'Community afternoon' on certain Tuesdays throughout the year, when the Centre offers transport to those who wish to visit the Centre but are unable to due to the lack of transport, distance involved etc. If you, or you know of anybody who might wish to avail themselves of this service, please contact either Wendy Cummin on 01245 250499 or Phil Walters on 01245 473191.

The archives in the Heritage Room include information on the history of St Michael's church, the racecourse and golf club as well as information on many local families. There is also a large photographic archive, much of which can be searched on computer, including the first book of the Ron White archive. Enquiries are welcome and help is available.

### GALLEYWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Comments or contributions to this Newsletter would be welcomed by the editor  
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# PAST TIMES

GALLEYWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Number 36 NOVEMBER 2011

www.essexinfo.net/galleywoodhistoricalsociety

## 19th Century Crime in Galleywood

WITH my forthcoming talk on 'Crime and Punishment' it seemed appropriate to record just three 'criminal' incidents that occurred in Galleywood in the 19th century.

On 24th April 1806, a duel with pistols was fought close to the windmill on the Common, between Lieutenant Torrens and Surgeon Fisher, both serving in the 6th Regiment of Foot; sadly the Lieutenant died the following day from his injuries. This was not strictly a criminal offence because duelling had not yet been made illegal but nevertheless any resultant death was treated as 'murder', but invariably the successful duellist was treated leniently.

In January 1833 the *Essex Chronicle* reported '*The other morning about nine o'clock a van containing a considerable number of tubs of gin was seized upon Galleywood Common by Mr Gerrard, Supervisor of Excise {at Chelmsford}. The smugglers had sufficient time to save the horses with which they made their escape.*' Mr Gerrard on making his report to the Board of Excise in London maintained that '*This Common has long been known as an unsavoury haunt of vagrants, gypsies, thieves, neer-do-wells and smugglers.*' He also complained that he did not have enough officers to control this '*pernicious place*'.

The most infamous Galleywood crime was committed in the last year of the century at the *Admiral Rous* inn on the Common. This inn was named after the famous sporting Admiral, who watched the races from an adjacent Betting Stand, which he treated as his



*The Admiral Rous Inn*

**Our next meeting**

# Crime and Punishment in Essex over the Centuries

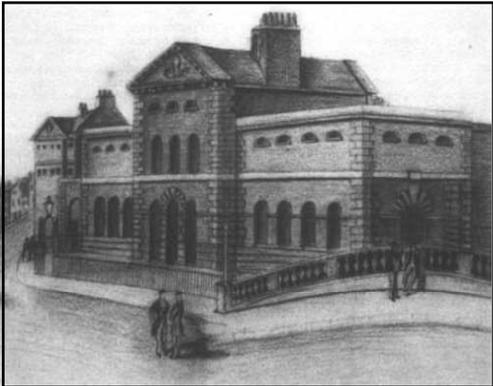
*A talk by Graham Smith*

I FIRST became interested in this subject whilst researching my book on Essex smuggling, but what really inspired me to delve deeper into the subject was an editorial in *The Times* newspaper in 1996 under the headline 'Essex Tales: the County that fell off the back of a Lorry'!



It claimed that Essex had always been 'a lawless place with a notorious reputation' for long having the highest rate of crime in England and Wales. I was determined to discover whether this additional slur on the county was indeed justified.

Some of the items I will cover in my talk are – the Peasants' Revolt – Dick Turpin – local control of crime, parish constables, village cages, stocks, pillory and gallows – Chelmsford Gaol and its House of Correction – 'Essex, the hotbed of women poisoners' – Formation of the first police forces – Essex Prison reformers...and more. There may be some things in my talk that you did not know about Essex, so I hope that you will be able to attend.



Chelmsford Gaol built in 1777 adjacent to the Stone Bridge

**Wednesday 16 November 2011  
Keene Hall Watchouse Road  
at 8 pm**

## **DATES for your Diary**

- 2012**
- 14 March** HOW THE ROADS CAME TO CHELMSFORD  
*Talk by Malcolm Stuart*
- 6 June** THE SPORTING HERITAGE OF GALLEYWOOD  
*Talk by Graham Smith*

own personal Stand when in Galleywood. It was in 1899 that Samuel Crozier and his second wife, Cecilia, obtained the licence of the *Admiral Rous*. He had previously been a publican of *The Globe* in Rainsford End, Chelmsford and Cecilia had been a barmaid at the *Fleece* in Duke Street. Crozier was not only addicted to strong drink but was also a very violent man. It soon became obvious to those frequenting the inn that Crozier was regularly beating his wife, there were obvious signs of her beatings and she quickly went from a cheerful young woman to a shadow of her former self. One night in a drunken fury he again beat her and she fell to ground, hitting her head with such force that she died the following morning. The doctor who attended was told that she had sustained her injuries as a result of a fall, and he recorded death by 'natural causes.' However, the matter was referred to the police and because of the evidence of previous violence by Crozier; he was arrested and charged with manslaughter, which was later changed to murder. He was ultimately found guilty of murder and before the sentence of death was carried out, he was asked whether he wished to say anything; he showed no contrition, he bent his head down, looked up and said nothing. Samuel Crozier was executed at Springfield gaol on 5th December 1899.

### **Galleywood – A peaceful Hamlet?**

ON 8TH OCTOBER 1804 *The Times* newspaper carried this report.  
*'The batteries raising on Galleywood Common, Essex, for the protection of the metropolis, in case of a landing being effected by the enemy on the Essex coast, are in a great state of forwardness. They already extend some miles in length, but, when completed, will occupy a distance of six miles.*  
*The situation has been judiciously chosen, and seems by nature designed for the purpose to which is applied. Its heights command an extensive view of the county of Essex, in every direction, so that it would be impracticable for any considerable force to pass from the coast to London, without being exposed to the fire of the batteries.*

*There are at present 2,500 of the military encamped on the Common; the greatest part of which consist of the Warwick and Surrey Militia All the privates are daily employed at the works, except about forty, whom it is thought necessary to keep on duty.'*  
It was not the first time that the villagers had to contend with a vast influx of soldiers. Only seven years earlier, on 4th April 1797, the Chelmsford sub-division of Yeomanry and Volunteer Cavalry were ordered to camp on the Common. This early form of 'The Home Guard' was thought to comprise some 1,500 officers and men. After finally being inspected by the Lord Lieutenant of the county, they were reported to have left the Common *'In a most orderly manner'*.

It is only possible to estimate the number of people living in Galleywood then, probably no more than seventy-five, as the whole of the parish of Great Baddow was then under four hundred and fifty. Such a large influx of troops must have made created quite a commotion and surely the innkeepers must have reaped the benefit! The troops were, of course, constructing a system of redoubts and a thirty gun battery to the north-west of the Common. The Heritage Room has archives on these Napoleonic fortifications. *Watchouse Road* is a present reminder of those long last days when Galleywood was an important stronghold along the Maldon to London road.