

and finding three pence. Deceased had been trying to obtain work at Galleywood. There was a drop of two yards at the edge of the pond. Witness found marks as if someone had been sitting there. Just below this was the deceased's cap. The body was six yards from the cap. The water was about a foot deep at that spot. Witness believed that the deceased went to sleep on the brow of the pond and fell in the water. The rushes were crushed down as though the deceased fell upon them. John Howard of Runwell, brother-in-law of the deceased, also gave evidence. Jurors said that the deceased had been known as a sober, steady man. An open verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.'

Christine Whybro has kindly told me that the *New Found Out* beer house, in Watchouse Road, is now a private house and the shallow pond, full of flags and reeds, was almost opposite it until a small housing estate was recently built in the vicinity.

Herbert David Wilson was working at Lathcoats in 1905, following his discharge, in January, from the Essex Regiment after twelve years' service; over nine of which were spent serving abroad in India, Burma and South Africa during the Second Boer War. On leaving the Army he joined his father, David Wilson, working at Lathcoats and he lived in Great Baddow and Galleywood. I can only speculate that he was in the precise area as part of his work when he made this tragic discovery.

Quite remarkably less than twelve months later, the same Coroner held an inquest into the death of James Brooks of the *New Found Out* beer house, who had unfortunately fallen on a slippery pavement in Baddow Road, Chelmsford in February 1906. He died from peritonitis resulting from an injury to his liver affected by the fall; he was buried in Galleywood churchyard on 17th February 1906.'

Susan Wilson

News from the Heritage Centre

CONSIDERABLE ARCHIVES from the Methodist Chapel have been lodged at the Centre, including a history written by John Bellamy.

The Third Anniversary of the Centre will be celebrated on 11th November after the Remembrance Service (from 12.00) and all will be welcome.

Christine & Les Whybro will be giving two talks on the history of the Common; they will take place on 29th January and 26th February 2013, and there will be a small charge of £2 in aid of charity.

A reunion afternoon is planned for March 2013 for all past pupils of the Old School, further details to be confirmed. If anybody would like to be invited, please contact Wendy on 01245 250499 or wendy.gfblueyonder.co.uk

GALLEYWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President Ted Hawkins

Chairman Graham Mundy Vice Chairman Graham Smith

Secretary Gillian Parker Treasurer Ken Edwards

Programme Director Ted Hawkins

Committee Madeleine Howard

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

GALLEYWOOD  HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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www.essexinfo.net/galleywoodhistoricalsociety

The Keene Hall

THE FOUNDATION STONE OF KEENE HALL was laid on 2nd October 1937, so this October marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of this most familiar building in the village; therefore it appears rather appropriate to look back over its history and that of its benefactress – Mrs Lavinia Clarissa Keene

She, and her husband, John Keene, had been born in Stepney and they married in London in 1893, when John was appointed the Secretary of the *Pearl Life Assurance & Investment Company*, which had been formed in 1864. In 1914 John Keene became a Director of the Company.

The Keenes moved to Galleywood on 9th August 1901 after purchasing Carlton House in *Beehive Lane* and the Home Farm that went with the property. Slowly over the years John Keene bought other land in the village including Pym's Farm, on part of which now stands Keene Hall. When John Keene died in September 1931, his estate was valued at over £1.1 million (some £39 million in today's values). It was only after his death that Lavinia Keene's boundless generosity became very evident, so much so that she became known as 'the Lady Bountiful'. In 1932 she donated £20,000 to Chelmsford Cathedral, part of which was used to renovate the organ and in the following year, due to her generosity, twenty-eight houses for elderly widows from the area were built in Springfield Road, Chelmsford and they became known as the Keene Memorial Homes.

In 1935 Mrs Keene financed the full cost of erecting two new classrooms at the Church school in *The Street*. Unlike most Essex villages at the time Galleywood did not have a 'village hall', so Mrs Keene proceeded to donate a plot of land on the corner of Watchouse Road and *The Street* and financed the construction of a large brick building, which became known as The Keene Hall.

On the day the foundation stone was laid, 2nd October 1937, for some reason Mrs Keene was unable to attend and her sister, Miss Nellie Stevens, deputised for her. At the formal ceremony the architect expressed the opinion that when completed the Hall would be 'one of the finest in Essex', and so it has proved to be.

The Keene Hall was formally opened by Mrs Keene on Saturday, 19th February 1938. The opening ceremony was a rather splendid occasion, it was attended by Great

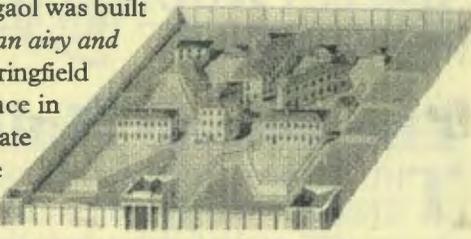


Courtesy the Heritage Centre Archive

Our next meeting

THE HISTORY OF SPRINGFIELD GOAL.

Talk by Two Prison Officers
Colin Brown & Mick Taylor

FROM 1819 TO 1828 a new gaol was built at Springfield at what was described as 'an airy and pleasant situation'. For almost two centuries Springfield Gaol has been a grim and forbidding presence in Chelmsford and our speakers will, I am sure, relate a fascinating insight into prison life over the ages. Why not come along and have a taste of real life 'Porridge'?!


OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL ALSO BE HELD

The Society has scored 'a ton'; our membership is now over 100! You will find enclosed your membership renewal form for 2013. Ken, our Treasurer, has asked, in order to reduce the delay on entry to the November meeting, that it would greatly help if these renewal forms were completed and brought with the requisite £5 fee to the meeting; it would be even better if they were sent to Ken beforehand. The form contains Ken's contact details.

Wednesday 14 November at 8 pm
Keene Hall Watchouse Road

DATE for your Diary

2013 13 Mar THE GONSON FAMILY AND SEABRIGHTS MANSION
Talk by Christine and Les Whybro

Keene Hall continued

Baddow parish councillors and the music was provided by the band of the Chelmsford Brotherhood, which Mrs Keene financially supported. In the evening there was a concert and dance held in the Hall, with piano duets, songs performed by many artists, including Monte Rey, who was then a Galleywood resident. The dance music was provided by the Playboys Dance Band and furthermore 'ample refreshments will be provided'.

During the Second World War the Hall became the headquarters of the Local Defence Volunteers (LDV), later 'The Home Guard' or now more famously known as 'Dad's Army'. They used the Hall for their parades, however, once these were over, they quickly adjourned to the nearby Eagle pub, which, as one ex-Home Guard member recalled 'it was our headquarters for quenching our thirsts'

Mrs Lavinia Keene died in 1949 and there were no children of the marriage. Her will included legacies to about forty charitable causes and institutions, many specific to Galleywood, which still continue over fifty years later. The Keene Hall was left in trust to

the parishioners of Galleywood

In 1950, because of overcrowding in the Church school, it was agreed that the Hall could be used by the School. Keene Hall came into greater prominence in the life of the village when on 1st April 1987 Galleywood became a civil parish. Prior to this event the Hall had been completely modernised, renovated and specially adapted to provide accommodation for the Parish Clerk's office and the Council. The first Council meeting was held in the Hall on 8th April 1987. Five years later the tiled roof was completely renovated.

There are two specially designated rooms in the Hall; the Lodge Room is named after Alfred William Lodge, who died in 1979 and it is so named in recognition of his large contribution to the local community. The smaller Ron White Room remembers the vast archive of local photographs that Ron collected over the years; this archive is now housed in the Heritage Centre.

Nowadays Keene Hall is used by a wide range of village societies and clubs as well as by parishioners and others for social functions, concerts and exhibitions. Over the last seventy-five years Keene Hall has served as an essential and integral part of the village scene, all due to the 'Lady Bountiful' – Mrs Lavinia C. Keene.

Strange case of drowning at Galleywood – 1905

I am greatly indebted to one of our members, Susan Wilson, for this story, which she uncovered during the course of her family history research. I will let Susan relate the story.

IN MARCH 1905 the local press reported the strange case of drowning at Galleywood. This story is of particular interest to me for local and family history reasons. Furthermore I live not far from the scene of the tragedy and I believe that Herbert Wilson, who found the body, was the grandfather of my husband, Richard.

'An inquest was held on Monday by Mr C. Edgar Lewis at the White Bear public house, Galley wood [sic] on Amos Chinery, aged 53

years, a labourer, unmarried, who was found drowned in a pond near the New Found Out beer house. William Mills of Great Baddow chase, identified the deceased, who had been lodging with him for a month. Witness last saw him Friday night when he was going to bed. The deceased owed 16s for lodgings. Witness had not pressed him for payment. James Brooks of the New Found Out beer house said: I have known the deceased for some years. Last Saturday he came into my house at five o'clock and stayed until ten. I served him with three pints of old and mild beer. He was quite sober, he formerly lodged with me. Herbert Hutson of Galley-end, Galley wood [sic], said deceased was quite sober on Saturday night.

Herbert Wilson of Beehive Lane spoke to finding the body at seven a.m. on Sunday. The head was lying towards the road, face downwards. PC Gibson spoke of searching the deceased,



The New Found Out from the Heritage Centre Archive