

PAST TIMES

GALLEYWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MARGARETTING – An Ancient Community.

It is almost two years (44 – November 2013) since I wrote about one of our neighbouring villages – Widford: I thought it might be time to look at another nearby village – Margarettling - especially as my forthcoming talk will cover Ingatestone, which is only two miles away from the village.

I would assume that most people travelling to Margarettling or Ingatestone would use the *Margarettling Road* down from the Common and drive over the historic and attractive Whites Bridge, which dates from 1770 and it is no surprise to discover that it is a Grade 2 listed structure. I find it quite remarkable to think of those long gone days when the Maldon stagecoaches used the very same bridge en route to Galleywood. Driving along from the Bridge one finally arrives at the crossroads and the centre of the present village.

Because Margarettling was situated on a Roman road, the community has a long and ancient past, indeed it appeared in the Domesday Book of 1086 when King William I held '*Ginga*' (the people of the district). This fact is shown on a blue plaque on '*The Square*' at the crossroads. '*The Square*' is a most attractive building, which was once the village's almshouses that were built in 1825. They were described in 1851 as "*19 tenements standing in the street, occupied by paupers or let to poor people.*"

Of course, being on a major road, later known as 'The Great Essex Road' and subsequently the A12, the village has a fine old milestone, which shows 'London – 25 miles, Chelmsford – 4 miles and Ingatestone – 2 miles'. In 1285 the village is shown as '*Genges See Margar*' – a reference to St Margaret's church. Indeed the fine sculpted wooden village sign in *Wantz Road* alongside the village

pond, not only displays St Margaret of Antioch but also the church dedicated to her. The sign was erected during 1977 and unveiled in April 1978. Like its close neighbour Ingatestone, the village greatly benefited when the A12 by-pass opened in 1959; prior to that the road through the village was choked with traffic and more especially during the summer months.

For a relatively small village – 363 houses and a population of 825 – Margarettling has no less than twenty-four listed buildings; also since 1982 the village has been the home of the Bishop of Chelmsford, who lives at *Bishopscourt*, which is set alongside the B1002 road. There is also a fine War Memorial.

Without exception all the writers on Essex have extolled the beauty of St Margaret's Church. In 1942 Arthur Mee in his '*The King's England: Essex*' wrote "*The church with the timber belfry with four bells four centuries old, and a rare Jesse window, give renown to this little village on the Roman road. No lover of beauty passes it by.*"

The church can be found about a mile along *Church Lane* and it is signposted - '15th century church' - off the road to Ingatestone. It is quite a shock to arrive at a railway level crossing and to discover that the church is isolated by the main line railway to London, which opened in 1841 and it is directly opposite Margarettling Hall.

The church is thought to date from the 12th century but it is now essentially from the 15th century, although certain parts were restored by Frederick Chancellor during 1869-70. From outside it looks a typical Essex church with its fine timbered belfry set on ten large posts with a shingled upper storey and an elegant spire.

On entering the church, one can understand why several writers have described it as "*a gem of a church*". The interior is rich in medieval wood carvings. It has a 15th century octagonal font but surely the East window is its real treasure – a 15th century Flemish stained glass 'Jesse' window; which is the only surviving 'Jesse' window in Essex. The window depicts 'The Tree of Jesse' to show that Christ was descended from Jesse, the father of David. Quite honestly it is difficult in mere words to do justice to this lovely church; I would strongly recommend a visit. To the south of the village is the hamlet

of Margaretting Tye, the word is thought to derive from the Old Norse word 'Teigr' – 'a strip of land'. It is probably best known now for *The White Hart Inn* in Swan Lane.

According to the Parish Council "the slow rate of development has been the main contributor to the character of the village as it exists today...Over the last 25 years only 17 new houses have been built.". So now we know!

Our Next Meeting.

Wednesday 9th September 2015 at 8pm at Keene Hall.

Ingatestone: 'A Tudor village.'

A talk by Graham Smith.

So why have I called Ingatestone a 'Tudor Village'? In my opinion there is no place in Essex that is so redolent of its Tudor past than Ingatestone. It is also a rather special place for me personally as it was the first Essex village I lived in when I first came to Essex in the mid-1960s and it also engendered my interest in Essex's history and heritage, which has continued unabated since then.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

11th November.

A talk on 'The Agricultural Depression of the 19th century including Galleywood and Great Baddow' by Neil Wiffen and of course, our Annual General Meeting.

9th March 2016. A Talk by Mr Bob Villa on 'My year as Mayor of Chelmsford: 2014/2015'.

FIFTY EDITIONS AND STILL COUNTING.

As you can see this is the 50th edition of our Newsletter, maybe a milestone that we should celebrate? Since the first '*Past Times*' appeared in February 2003, we have covered many aspects of the historical events and life in Galleywood. David Stacy, the first editor, introduced the first '*Past Times*' with these words:

"Since we formed our Society over three years ago. The attendance at our meetings has confirmed a considerable interest in things

historical. Our village has no manor house or ancient castle with secret tunnels and, as churches go, ours is a comparative youngster. Nevertheless we do have a history, and there seems to be an insatiable desire to be part of it..." Well over twelve years later and 100+ Society members it might well be said this '*insatiable desire*' is even stronger now.

GALLEYWOOD GOOD NEIGHBOURS.

The next Coffee Morning will be held at Keene Hall on Friday 11th September, at 10 am; just two days after our meeting. Perhaps you would like to come along and have a tea or coffee and have 'A Chat'? Also you might know of a friend or neighbour, who is lonely and might like to come along to meet others in a similar position. If you live in Galleywood, I have included a leaflet, which gives the details of the future dates of the Coffee Mornings.

NEWS FROM THE HERITAGE CENTRE.

During September there will be a display on 'Hoffmann & Marconi' in the Heritage Room. On Tuesday afternoon 8th September Ian Hook, the Curator of Essex Regiment Museum, will give a talk on 'WW1 – an Essex perspective'. There will also be a talk on Tuesday 29th September on 'Marconi & Hoffmann's Past' by Catherine Pearson. During October there will be a display 'Memories' in the Heritage Room. On Tuesday afternoon 27th October Philip Field & Barrie Dennis will give a talk on 'Growing up In Galleywood before and after the war'. All the talks take place in the Main Hall and begin at about 1.30 pm. There is a charge of £3 for all the talks.

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GALLEYWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President Ted Hawkins

Chairman: Graham Mundy. Vice Chairman: Graham Smith.

Secretary: Gillian Parker. Treasurer: Ken Edwards.

Programme Director: Ted Hawkins.

Committee: Alex Gilbert & Geraldine Willden.

Comments or contributions to this Newsletter would be welcomed by the editor: Graham Smith
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