

PAST TIMES

GALLEYWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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GREAT BADDOW: OUR NEARBY NEIGHBOUR.

As this edition of *'Past Times'* is being printed for the first time in Great Baddow – by The Design & Print Partnership – I thought that it would be a rather appropriate time to take a brief look at Great Baddow's history as Galleywood had been long connected to this neighbouring village.

I say 'village' but at the 2011 census, its population numbered – 14,650 - which makes it the largest village in Essex; this figure compares with Galleywood at the same time as 5,738. The village is only about two miles from Chelmsford, although most of its residents would assure you that they live Great Baddow rather than Chelmsford, which is probably not too surprising considering in the 19th century it was described as "*remarkable for being one of the sweetish villages in the kingdom and the number of its gentile inhabitants,*" – fine praise indeed! The village's name is said to derive from *'Beadewan'* - the Celtic name for the River Chelmer; 1086 it was shown as *'Baduuen'*. The village centre is now, quite rightly, a Conservation area with 30 listed buildings.

The imposing and attractive St Mary's Church with its slender spire appears to dominate the centre of the village as it has done for centuries. It has been claimed that in that fateful summer of 1381 the 'commoners of Essex' gathered in the Churchyard before marching to London in what is now known as 'The Peasants' Revolt'. Just further along *Church Street* is The Old Brewery, which is now a Grade II listed building. It was built in 1868 for the Baddow Brewery Company; there had been a brewery on the site from 1798. Just beyond this building along *Church Street* at *The Bringey* is Baddow Antiques Centre, which

has a number of different companies there and to my knowledge it has been there for at least thirty years

However, in my opinion one of the striking features of the village is of more recent origins – ‘The Great Baddow Mast’. It is along *Vicarage Lane* overlooking the Lawn Cemetery and was located at the Marconi Research Laboratory in 1954, which had moved into the village in 1936. It is only one of five surviving radar masts of the Second World War; moreover it is the only one of their original height – 360 feet – and also with two cantilever platforms. It was originally sited at Canewdon Essex. The mast is a most prominent landmark and is visible for many miles; in fact it is portrayed on the new Village sign, which was erected at the corner of *Church Street* and *Galleywood Road* in 2013, which shows that the Parish Council consider it such an important aspect of the village.

The Marconi Company were also responsible for one of the earliest modern housing developments in the village when in 1956 they developed ‘The Rothmans Estate’ to house their employees and those of the English Electric Valve Company. Of course, since those days many new housing developments have been built in Great Baddow, along with a number of warden controlled blocks of flats; hence the size of the population.

In 1894 Great Baddow became a civic parish and until April 1987 it included all of the village of Galleywood. The Parish Hall, which is a Grade 2 listed building, is situated in *Maldon Road* and directly opposite ‘The Vineyards’ The village used to have a Pleasure Fair, which was held annually on 14th May but it was abolished in 1878.

I suppose that most visitors to village today assume that ‘The Vineyards’ is in fact Great Baddow; it is certainly the most dominant feature of the centre of the village. This shopping centre is an ever present reminder of the fine Georgian mansion of that name, which stood in its own grounds on the site. It later became a hotel, until it was demolished in the 1960s. ‘The Vineyards’ shopping centre opened in 1968. At least these visitors can see the delightful array of old cottages and houses along *Pump Hill*, *Bell Lane* and *The Causeway* that border ‘The Vineyards’. Below ‘The Vineyards’ in *High Street* is

the United Reform Church and close by is the new Public Library, which opened in 1981, it had previously been situated in *Bell Lane*.

At the present time the village has three inns – *'The King's Head'*, *'The White Horse'* and *'The Blue Lion'*, all in the village centre. We, in Galleywood, have four but not, of course the fine *'Pontlands Park Hotel'* along *West Hanningfield Road* or the *'Great Baddow Barn'* on *Galleywood Road*.

I am afraid that space has limited this to a brief account of this rather lovely village but if you would like to find out more information, I can recommend *'Great Baddow Oral History'*, a book compiled by Allen Buckroyd in 2003 with the help of the Oral History Group of the U3A. Speaking of which Galleywood still retains a tenuous link with the village as the U3A is named Baddow and Galleywood U3A and also a number of our Society members live in Great Baddow.

OUR NEXT MEETING.

Wednesday, 8th March 2017, 8p.m. at Keene Hall.

'Essex-by-the-Sea' A Talk by Graham Smith.

I will be giving the talk, which will relate to the rise and development of Essex seaside resorts over the last two centuries or so; right around from the so-called *'Sunshine Coast'* (Walton-on-the-Naze, Frinton & Clacton) to Canvey Island in the Thames Estuary and including all the other resorts along the coast.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday, 14th June.

'The Blue Plaques of Chelmsford.' A Talk by Nick Wickenden.

Wednesday, 5th July.

'Gone For New England' A Talk by Graham Smith.

Please note that this talk will form part of the Galleywood Festival and as such it will take place in St Michael's and All Angels Church and will commence at 2.30 p.m.

SOCIETY NEWS.

Our membership now numbers – 74 - which includes 9 honorary members - admittedly a drop in membership since last year but I gather that most of the village societies have also experienced a fall in membership. However, on a more positive note, the Society has now

received the £1.000 legacy from the late Ted Hawkins' estate; so what with the recent increase in membership fees, the Society's financial position stands at £1,875 and it is far better than it has been for a number of years.

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.

There is not really much new to report, except, of course that the Oral History Interviews are ongoing. At the present time of writing 13 Interviews have taken place and in the fullness of time and with enough Oral History Interviews completed, it might be quite a nice thought that the Society could produce a '*Galleywood Oral History*' booklet on the style of the '*Galleywood Diary*', which the Society produced last year.

GALLEYWOOD GOOD NEIGHBOURS.

The Committee were very pleased to learn that their application for a grant of £300 from the Parish Council had been approved; this will ensure that the Coffee Mornings will take place until **April 2018**. So far the Coffee Mornings have been quite popular with a number of regulars always attending. All the Coffee Mornings are normally held on the second Friday in the month from 10 a.m. to Noon at The Keene Hall. The dates to note for **2017** are **10th March, 7th April, (changed because of Easter), 12th May and 9th June**. However, the Committee feel that they would like to encourage more people to attend; so if you could recommend them to a friend or neighbour the Committee would be pleased and very grateful.

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GALLEYWORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President: David Stacy .

Chairman: Graham Mundy. Vice-Chairman: Graham Smith.

Secretary & Programme Director Gillian Parker. Treasurer: Geraldine Willden

Committee: Alex Gilbert, Ken Edwards & Stephanie Troop.

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