



Our Olympic Torchbearer

KEN EDWARDS, the Society's Treasurer, has been selected to be one of the Olympic Torchbearers for Chelmsford; there are a total of 40,000 throughout the country. I am sure you will all wish to congratulate Ken on this most singular honour.

The only details Ken has on the event at the moment is that will take place on the evening of Friday 6th July, when he, and another torchbearer, will cover the stretch from the entrance to *Hylands Park* right up the House itself, where the Olympic Torch will remain overnight; the only stopping place in Essex. This will be the culmination of the 'Sparks will Fly' event taking place in *Hylands Park*.

I Never Knew That About Essex

CONTINUING our sporting theme, quite remarkably the *King's Oak* inn at High Beach staged the first ever speedway racing event in the country, which took place on 19th February 1928; the Inn already had a cycle track at the rear of the property, which was adapted for the new sport. The speedway event had been organised and approved by the Auto-Cycle Union and two Australian speedway riders, Billy Galloway and Keith MacKay were riding in the event; they had specially travelled from Australia to introduce the sport into the U.K. The first speedway races had taken place in Australia five years earlier. A second speedway event was held at High Beach a few months later, and it was said to have attracted over 20,000 spectators. From these two events, speedway racing quickly spread throughout the country. The next speedway racing in Essex took place at West Ham in July 1928.



The King's Oak, High Beach in 1912

News from the Heritage Centre

WENDY CUMMIN reports that the 'Walk & Talk' events have been very successful, thanks to the sterling efforts of Christine and Les Whybro, who continue to spread their wide knowledge of Galleywood's history and heritage. Also more people are lodging their photographs and archives with the Centre.

The 'David Cook archive' is particularly interesting; David has shared all his information on a wide-ranging topics of the village, such as the allotments, the Memorial Hall that never was, the parish council and school day memories. He is the oldest surviving person born in Galleywood, and is very proud of this!

The Community Days continue to prove to be very popular; the next one is on the 14th August from 1.30 to 3.30 pm.

There will be a special event at the Centre from 22nd May until 26th June. It has been arranged with the Horticultural Society to mark their centenary; then from 1st July until 28th August there will be a display on 'A Celebration of Sport'.

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
Graham Smith at 28 Russell Gardens, Chelmsford, CM2 8DB
email: grahamsmith99@hotmail.co.uk

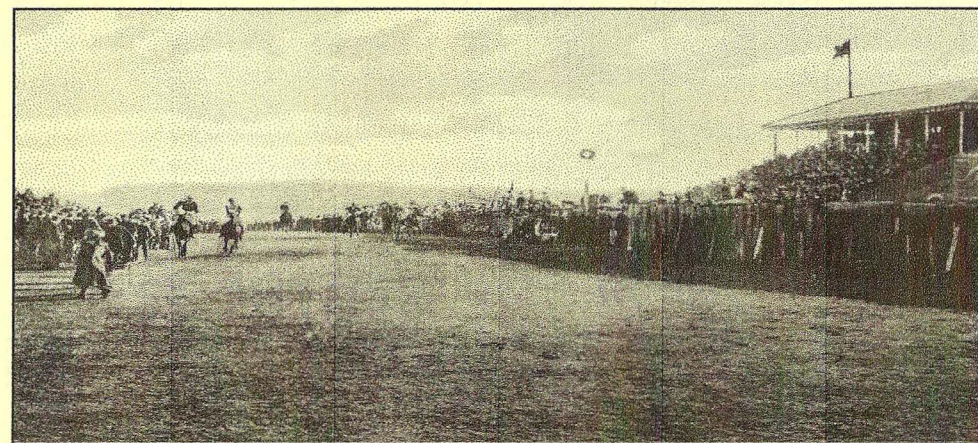
PAST TIMES

GALLEYWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Number 38 May 2012

www.essexinfo.net/galleywoodhistoricalsociety

The Sporting Heritage Of Galleywood



WITH the imminence of the London Olympic Games, your Committee thought that it would be rather appropriate to mark this major sporting event with a look at the sporting heritage of the village; this will be the subject of my talk on 6th June. For those of you who might not be able to attend on that evening, I have written some brief and salient facts about the subject.

It probably goes without saying that Galleywood racecourse is the earliest recorded sporting event in the village. The first horse racing on the Common certainly dates back to 1759, although it is possible that some form of racing took place there many years earlier. Shortly after the newspaper's foundation, the Chelmsford Chronicle carried a report of a three-day race meeting on the Common which took place from 21st/23rd August 1764, when one of the races was for the Town Plate, which was worth £50. Six years later the racecourse received Royal approval when King George III offered the Queen's Plate for the princely sum of one hundred guineas. Then in 1777 the racecourse was clearly marked on Chapman and André's Map of Essex.

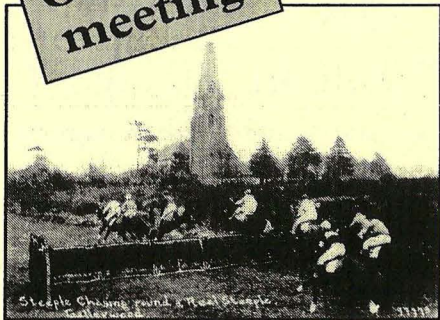
The first grandstand was built in 1779 and the race meetings attracted large crowds. But the heyday of the racecourse was during the 1860/70s and in 1862 a new grandstand was built. In 1892 steeplechase and National Hunt meetings replaced the flat racing. The course, which was about twenty-two acres in extent, was unique in that it enclosed

Our next meeting

The Sporting Heritage of Galleywood

A talk by Graham Smith

My talk is outlined in the leading article but it will, of course, be in much greater detail, with some interesting and perhaps little known facts about the Racecourse, the golf course on the Common, the village's cricket and football clubs, Chelmer Park and other sports.



Wednesday 6 June 2012 at 8 pm
Keene Hall Watchouse Road

Sporting Heritage continued

the new church of St Michael and All Angels, a windmill and later, for a brief time, Chelmsford golf course.

In 1932 a new members' grandstand was built, which could accommodate seven hundred people. However, within thirteen years the racecourse had closed, the last race meeting was held on 29th April 1935 with the final race being the 'Maldon Steeplechase'. From then on until early 1939 the course was used for pony races and trekking. The racecourse was sold in March 1939 for £1,850 and two years later the course and the Common were bought by Chelmsford Rural District Council for £2000. Besides the Heritage Centre in the old grandstand, the white fencing that marks out the major part of this historic racecourse has, according to the parish council, become "a historic icon, which should always be preserved".

During the late Victorian days golf had become a fast growing sport around the county, and in May 1893 Chelmsford Golf Club was founded and their first home and course was based on the Common. A leading golf course designer of the time built a nine-hole course on the Common with the nearby *Horse and Groom* inn acting as the clubhouse, until 1906, when a large shed alongside the Inn became the clubhouse. Within two years the Club had eighty-nine members (68 men and 21 ladies). The Club remained at Galleywood until April 1912, when it moved to its new course at Widford. The landlord of the *Horse and Groom* still maintained the old course and he charged those who wished

DATES for your Diary

2012

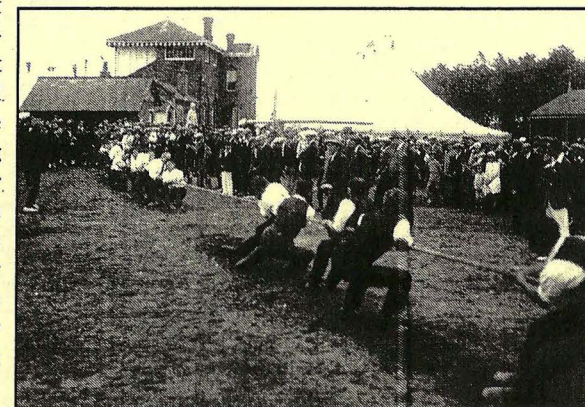
- 12 Sept THE SEABRIGHT FAMILY AND THE OLD HALL
Talk by Christine Whybro
- 14 Nov AGM and THE HISTORY OF SPRINGFIELD GAOL
Talk by two Prison Officers

to play – 9d a round! The golf course survived until around 1916 when slowly nature took over once again.

Galleywood Football Club or Galleywood Social, as it was formerly known, was formed in 1912. It played its matches at 'Clarke's Field' in Slades Lane. It was not until the 1920/21 season that the Club became affiliated to the Chelmsford and Mid-Essex league, which had been formed in 1898.

The village's cricket club came rather late onto the cricketing scene, as there is evidence of many Essex village cricket clubs being formed in the 19th century. The Club was actually formed in 1930 largely at the instigation of George Barford, a resident of Galleywood, who was then the Town Clerk of Chelmsford. A meadow field at the rear of his property was duly prepared as a cricket ground and named 'Woodlands' after the name of his house. The Club's first game was held on 9th May 1931 and was against Boreham and the team achieved its first win. In the following year the first pavilion was built by the club members in time for the new season. The Cricket Club and the Football Club still play their matches at Woodlands in Slades Lane.

One of the sporting features of the inter-war years was the tug-of-war competitions and many present residents in the village have fond memories of these very competitive events against neighbouring villages; in fact the Tug-of-War 'Marvens' Challenge Shield (a reminder of the Marvens brickworks) was first competed for in 1923. These competitions were re-introduced into the village in July 1978 on the occasion of the first Galleywood Carnival.



The development of Chelmer Park by Chelmsford Borough Council during the late 1960s certainly put the village on the map in sporting terms. The Park then provided football, hockey and cricket pitches, and netball and tennis courts. It was officially opened on 21st March 1971 with the pavilion opening over a year later on 23rd April. The Park soon became the home of Chelmsford Cricket Club, which had been first formed back in 1811, as well as the home of Chelmsford Hockey Club, which had been founded back in 1898, and the Club now plays in the National League. In 2003 it was the venue of a hockey international match between England and Japan. The Borough Council are justifiably proud of Chelmer Park; it has recently received the nationally acclaimed Green Flag Award for excellence. The Council also claims that it is 'an important sporting venue in Essex'. Besides this vast expanse of playing fields, there are also two football pitches at Jubilee Park.

The Short Mat Bowls Club was founded in 1989 with its first club night being held in May of that year. It is still going strong with meetings on Monday evenings at the Infant School and on Wednesday afternoons in the Keene Hall.

Saturday 2nd June will be the village's Fun Day, it will be held on the Common from noon to 6pm. There will be various fun races and a Tug-of-War competition: let us hope that the weather will be kind to us!

Graham Smith