



Chairman - John Turkentine

Email:- John.turkentine@gmail.com

Mobile:- 07976742827

Newsletter August 2026

Chairman's Report

Good news - The four new individual lectern style noticeboards were installed, one at each of the Common carpark entrances, during late June and formally opened with a symbolic ribbon cutting by Cllr. Janette Potter on Monday 6th July. The Galleywood Common Association Committee members are contributing to a companion heritage trail being developed to support Chelmsford City Council's application for a Green Flag Heritage Award.



Work is well underway collating photographs and text for the addition of individual information lecterns to be sited at various viewpoints and remaining artefacts of heritage and historic interest on The Common. This is very much in line with the Galleywood Common LNR banner which stands for **Local Nature Reserve**.

Typical sites are the remains of the defensive Napoleonic earth works made redundant post 1805, and the old Brickworks which closed in 1939, and the billeting and training of British troops on the racecourse during WW1, the Racecourse closed around 1937, and the 'putting to the plough' of the lower Common during both World wars to produce locally grown food. After WW2 a programme of making safe previously excavated areas on the Common, which over the years had become local refuse tips. In all cases 'Nature' has returned.

Notable other users of the Common are the public, particularly dog walkers, horse riders only on a specified route, on part of the old racecourse and approved training sessions by Emergency Search and Rescue. The Village Jubilee Celebrations on 2nd June 2012 used part of the racecourse for sporting events and a dedicated landing pad for helicopter rides over the village. None of these events have had a lasting adverse effect on the nature of Galleywood Common.

The Committee welcomes the return of Lynda Van Veen, a regular walker on the Common, as an additional Warden.

John Turkentine

Wildlife on The Common

A Scorpion on Galleywood Common



Seen during the Bird Watch walk on the common in October 2025, on the track to Byron Hall near the old water jump. Actually, it is not a scorpion, but probably a Devil's Coach Horse beetle. It sounds dramatic and has some colourful stories attached to it. It was rumoured to be the first beetle to appear when someone dies, hence the name. Also said to be able to curse people by raising its tail. It can spray an unpleasant chemical from its tail to defend itself. A common type of rove beetle that is usually active at night. A fast moving and ferocious predator of smaller creatures such as slugs. It kills and eats them with mandibles, visible in the photo.

Photo Courtesy - John Laidler

Deer in my Garden



A Doe Muntjac and her Fawn foraging in my garden, obligingly leaving nutrients (for free) for my future plantings. Nature at its best The original photo taken from indoors through a closed window, so as not to scare off these very timid animals.

Original photo Courtesy - Janette Potter.

(Image subsequently AI enhanced)

Watch where you are Walking!



In April 2023, whilst finishing the filming on The Common of a blackbird looking for grubs in a pile of dead leaves, I quickly turned to carry on walking up the sandy track and almost stepped onto this specimen Peacock Butterfly. Fortunately, it was basking in the Spring sunshine, so I flicked my phone camera settings to Macro single shot to capture this photo.

Photo Courtesy - John Turkentine

Fauna and Flora on the Common



Photos Courtesy – Richard Wilson

A hungry mouse rummaging in waste food container at the Galleywood Heritage Centre

A good crop of Sloes this year, *basis for brewing a Sloe Gin for Christmas 2027?*

Help Required



I took this photo of my Granddaughter Abigail in the Summer of 2006. She was standing on one of the two concrete plinths with rusted studs somewhere within the lower part of the old brickworks some feet above the flooded area. These plinths may have possibly supported a winch, however I can no longer locate them.

Photo Courtesy – John Turkentine

.....
The next Newsletter is planned for November 2026. Please forward any relevant photos and/or comments email :- john.turkentine@gmail.com or

Mobile: - 07976 742827 (I am on WhatsApp)