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## **Newsletter May 2026**

### **Chairman's Report**

**At the AGM on Thursday April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026 Bob Villa informed the Committee 'That, unfortunately, for the time being I find my personal life has changed, in as much that my family needs greater support. Therefore, to give this support I will not be putting my name forward although I will continue my interest in and my support of the Association'.**

**The remaining eight committee members, Susan Bluden, Brian Blunden, David Eagar, Andrea French, Anne Pepper, Janette Potter, John Laidler and John Turkentine were re-elected on bloc.**

**John Turkentine was unanimously elected Chairman and Cllr Janette Potter unanimously elected Vice-Chairman.**



**The five new, regularly updated, notice boards are just one of the ways that has improved the communications between Chelmsford City Council Parks, the Association and the Public. The responses to queries, damage and maintenance reports are being speedily dealt with.**

**I try to meet up with the volunteer working groups who are very keen to learn about The Common, its history and wildlife and what both Galleywood Common Association and Galleywood Heritage Centre do.**

**Our next meeting is the Annual Common Walk on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July.  
Meet in the Main Car Park off Margaretting Road at 7.00 pm.**

**John Turkentine**

## Bird Walk

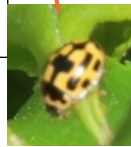
On Sunday 19th April the Galleywood Heritage Centre held its annual spring bird walk on Galleywood Common on a lovely sunny morning. Around 40 species of birds were seen or heard with highlights being White Throat and the birds of prey - Kestrel, Buzzard, Red Kite and Sparrow Hawk. The annual autumn bird walk will take place on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2026.



Speckled Wood Butterfly



Crabapple Blossom



Susan Wilson

## Trees on The Common

Galleywood Common is a Lowland Heath, with relatively poor soil supporting Gorse, Heather and grasses. There were only a few scrub trees on the top of the Common until the 1930/1940s. The Gorse was kept well under control, being harvested by villagers and particularly local bakers for their bread ovens, as it burns at a higher temperature.



The Galleywood Heritage Centre Archive image of the brick works in early 1920s, with the newly completed Grandstand on left horizon. Much of this working area is now flooded - The Pond.



**An image of a view of The Common as it was in the 1920s. The Trees in the background were within in the churchyard and the attached glebe land. The heather and gorse in blossoming in the foreground - no trees**

**After the closure of the racecourse in 1935 and the brick works in early 1940, windblown silver birch seeds established saplings in the bare soil and the unattended remains of the earlier decommissioned Napoleonic fortifications earth works from 1805.**

**Silver Birch is a very quick growing tree, it's large volume of saplings beyond the control of the then rabbit and deer population, but is comparatively shortly lived. Annual leaf fall and decaying wood /bark soon formed a humorous layer allowing bird dropped acorns to shoot.**

**In the early 1950s Myxomatosis decimated the rabbit population allowing all the tree saplings to grow to maturity, and annually provided increasing amount of leaf fall, further enriching the soil!**

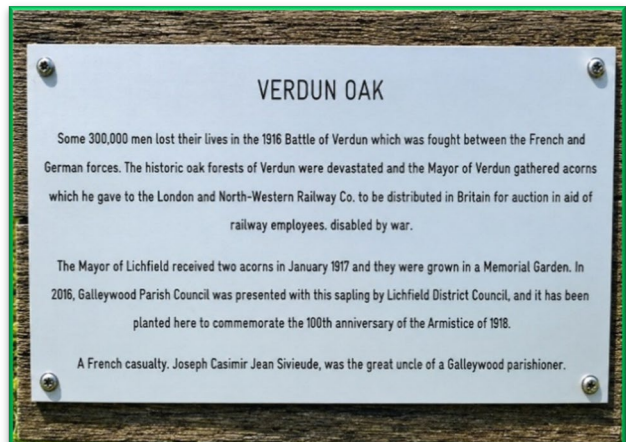
**In recent times very few oak saplings have actually been planted**



**On the Triangular grassed area to the rear of the Galleywood Youth Centre at the junction of The Street with Stock Road.**



**On the Grassed area at the junction of Church Lane with Margaretting Road**



**Another sapling, not on The Common, but on the Galleywood Parish Council owned land at Twitten Green. A Verdun Oak.**

