

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

DECEMBER 2001

■ NUMBER 363.

We Wish you a Happy Christmas



A wintery scene in Berengrave Lane, Rainham, during the long freeze of 1947. There are several ghost stories attributed to this area, on a dark winter's night it would be easy to believe them. See Freddie Cooper's article about Berengrave on page 8.

Robert J. Kitney

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Next Issue: JANUARY 19TH
Copy Date: Jan 1st Sm Ads Jan 4th
Editorial: Mrs Barbara Mackay Miller,
5 Meresborough Cotts, Tel: 231307.
Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller,
5 Meresborough Cotts, Tel: 231307.

Editorial

Several roads in Rainham have changed names over the years, some by a deliberate act on the part of the Council, others just by corruption during general usage. High Dewar, Meresborough, and the example Freddie Cooper writes about this month, Berengrave, can all be found with various spellings on old maps. The gradual change still continues, for example no one seems sure whether Mierscourt should be one or two words, the school usually write it as Miers Court but at one time some road signs had it as one word and others as two. Does it really matter as long as everyone is clear where is meant? Probably not and it certainly gives those of us who are notoriously bad at spelling a good excuse!

For the last month Meresborough Road has had a warning sign that we were shortly, at the weekend, to have the line markings renewed and given the width of the lane, this would cause long delays as the road would be blocked whilst it happened. At first one weekend passed, then another and yet another with nothing happening and the sign graduating from new, to annotated, to positively 'beaten up' (I think something drove over it) we thought the project had been abandoned. Well yesterday they came. A young lad with a machine that looked as though he were about to mark out a tennis court actually did the job, supported by two enormous lorries to carry the paint, I suppose, and of course a gang of workmen. Unfortunately, no one over-prepared the court or even prepared the edges of the road at all. Consequently the continuous white line down each side faithfully follows the contour of each pothole it encounters but as a piece de resistance actually goes right over the top of a pile of horse manure which happened to be in the way. I am afraid the lines will not have a very long life before they fade into oblivion again. I shouldn't mock though, actually the white lines are extremely useful occasionally, particularly on foggy days and at night.

Once again the year has fled by and we will soon be in 2002, as usual we will produce a combined January and February edition of Action Forum published on January 19th, this hopefully avoids the worst of the bad weather for our loyal distributors and means I do not have to prepare the copy whilst cooking Christmas dinner! Many thanks to all of you

who have volunteered to help with Action Forum distribution, your assistance is much appreciated. We now have about 50 people involved but could still use others; if you have a couple of hours to spare once a month ring either 231307 or 371591 during shop hours. We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and we will see you again in January.

Correspondence

WOMEN IN MEDWAY IN WWII

Dear Editor,

Please Help!

Was the Second World War an emancipating experience for the women of Medway?

I am a mature history student studying at University of Kent, Canterbury, and a resident born and bred in Gillingham. I am proud of my roots here in Medway and want to extend my knowledge.

My main focus is on the following areas:

Work Life: including any voluntary work.

Social Life: pubs, clubs, dancing, cinema, theatre – romance, marriage.

Domestic Life: rationing, shopping, child-care arrangements, family networks.

Have you any old photographs or stories that you would be willing to share – how did the war make a different to you?

For a balanced perspective I would welcome responses from men and women who were living in Medway prior to the outbreak of war and either stayed for the duration or returned shortly afterwards.

Christine Jones
14 Swain Road
Wigmore, Gillingham,
Kent ME8 0SN
Tel: 01634 260378

RAINHAM LOCAL HISTORY

Dear Editor,

I was a Dockyard Apprentice in the late 1940s and I worked in a team of artisans, refitting submarines.

One day, in conversation with a Mr Bill Ryan, he told me that he had once worked in Rainham, on the construction of the Gas Showrooms (now the Manor Farm), at the junction of Maidstone Road and the High Street.

When the building was completed it was decided to widen the footpath on the corner. The site was on high ground so a considerable amount of soil had to be excavated for the realignment.

While excavating this soil, human remains were found. Work was suspended, and the Coroner informed. Subsequent investigation revealed that the bones were very old, probably about 500 years.

As nothing else was known, the matter was closed, with the assumption that the body was the victim of foul play, or possibly an executed criminal – the one time custom being to hang robbers at crossroads

(Berengrave Lane originally continued up to the High Street, making a crossroads).

I believe that Mr Ryan was later lost in the HMS *Truculent* (submarine) disaster in 1949.

Do any readers of Action Forum know of this story, and is there any documentary evidence of the Coroner's Hearing?

Richard John Church
01622 235892

Dear Editor,

I currently reside in the USA but return to England each year. I was brought up in Rainham, my parents owned the (then) Newsagents shop at 133 High Street (top of Ivy Street). I attended Orchard Street School for Girls in the 1940s in Mrs Todd's class. Some of my classmates were Pat Chaplin, Dorren Whitehouse, Anne Cross and Yvonne Seary. I would love to contact any of these people and others from our class or anyone else from your area who remembers me.

After school I delivered papers (as far as Meresborough) and worked in the shop but I spent many happy hours at the local Youth Club and in the café opposite my father's shop, drinking tea and hotly debating many topics. How carefree were those days – we were happy with so little.

In anticipation,

Sincerely,
Mrs Wendy Bean
(née Green)
Far Horizons
55 N. Pantano Road #388
Tucson, AZ 85710
Telephone 520 731 2683

DERELICT HIGH STREET SITE

Dear Editor,

About three months ago three trenches were dug in the old Co-op ground opposite the church in Rainham High Street. Two days later they were filled in again. Does anyone know why? I would like to suggest that the area is used as a garden for everyone to enjoy – perhaps part of the 'Timebank' scheme.

Yours faithfully
Mrs J.P. Thompson
Holmoaks
Rainham

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CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Rainham School for Girls in Derwent Way, Rainham, are holding their Christmas Bazaar on Tuesday 4th December from 6.00 to 8.00pm. Admission is 20p and all are welcome to come and sample our Crafts, Games, Christmas Fayre and Santa's Grotto.

'HANDS ON THE WHEEL'

Hands has, for over 30 years, operated a volunteer transport scheme taking clients to medical appointments and social events. Drivers use their own vehicles and are paid a mileage rate. All transport arrangements are all made through the bureau office to suit the drivers and clients.

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Regular contact with the office, support meetings and a newsletter keeps drivers involved with what's going on at the bureau and with all its activities.

For more information please contact the Hands & Gillingham Volunteer Bureau 01634 304204.

DISTRIBUTION

Door to door distribution of Action Forum is once again carried out by a willing band of volunteers. During the first full week of each month approximately 50 people help by posting Action Forum through your letterbox. The money that was allocated for distribution is now donated to charity. Since we began this scheme in September 2000 £1,700 has been given to the Kajiado project providing clean water and building schools in Kenya. We recently began supporting the church roof appeals of St Margaret's and St Matthew's churches, £350 has been sent to each fund. We would still appreciate more volunteers to help each month, all 20,000 copies are distributed each month but a few individuals could do with help, so even if you regularly receive a copy of Action Forum but have a couple of hours to spare once a month, and enjoy walking with a purpose, please do get in touch either on 231307 or 371591 (during shop hours).

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Diary 2001

Keeper: Mrs Christine Smith
275 Wigmore Road
Wigmore
Tel: 233098

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Diary Copy Date: 1st January 2002

- December 1st – St Peter's Church, Bredhurst.
CHRISTMAS FAYRE 2.00pm, Bredhurst Village Hall. Father Christmas Grotto, Grand Draw and all usual stalls and attractions.
- December 1st – Parkwood School CHRISTMAS FAYRE 1.00pm, Infant School Hall. Admission 50p, Senior Citizens 30p, Children free.
- December 1st – CHRISTMAS BAZAAR, Miers Court PTF. 11.00am to 2.00pm. Our theme is ADVENT. Open your first door to a school full of fun. Everyone welcome.
- December 1st – Hartlip Parish Church Christmas Bazaar in the Village Hall, 2.00pm, to be opened by David Fosdike, all welcome.
- December 1st – Kent Recorder Ensemble, St Margaret's Church, Rainham. 7.30pm.
- December 2nd – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.30am Upchurch River Valley Golf. 4½ miles, followed by Christmas Dinner (if booked). Dogs on leads.
- December 2nd – Countryside Event. Tree/hedge planting day, Capstone Country Park, ring 812196 for details.
- December 3rd – Medway Spinners Dyers & Weavers Association. Christmas Party.
- December 3rd – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club meet 2.00 to 4.00pm, Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore. We mostly play bingo, have a raffle, tea and biscuits. People over the age of 50 are welcome and transport can sometimes be arranged. Ring 362662 for details.
- December 4th – Medway Scrabble Club 2.00 to 4.00pm. Riverside Indoor Bowls Complex, Chatham.
- December 4th – Gillingham Horticultural Society. Floral Art Group. CHRISTMAS 'DO'.

- December 4th – Rainham School for Girls, Christmas Bazaar, 6.00 to 8.00pm. Admission 20p, all welcome.
- December 4th – Rainham Minders meet at Methodist Church Hall, Station Road, 9.30 to 11.30am. All registered childminders welcome, ring Claire on 376270 for details.
- December 5th – Friendship Circle, Parkwood Christian Fellowship. 2.15pm. Telephone 365758 for further details.
- December 5th – Gillingham Horticultural Society XMAS DANCE, Lloyds Social Club. 8.00 to 11.00pm. Members £6 Non-members £7. Buffet included. For tickets please ring 360624.
- December 6th – Wigmore Thursday Club. Club Outing – Christmas 'Carry On' – Paul Harris.
- December 6th to 15th – Medway Little Theatre 'Death and the Maiden' by Ariel Dorfman, 7.30pm, tickets 400322.
- December 7th – Gillingham Recorded Music Society. Christmas. Film Music arranged by Michael Smith, followed by Social. 7.15 to 9.15pm, St Augustine's Church Room (top of Rock Avenue), Gillingham. Ring 852905 for details (see 16th November).
- December 7th – Wakeley Junior School XMAS FAYRE. Many festive stalls etc. Refreshments available. Admission 30p, everyone welcome.
- December 7th – St Margaret's Infants School Christmas Fair, 2.30pm. Ring 366712 for details or stall (£6 per table). All welcome.
- December 8th – Countryside Event, Christmas Fair. 11.00 to 3.00pm, Riverside Country Park. Ring 378987 for details.
- December 8th – CAROL CONCERT, 7.30pm, St Mark's Church, Canterbury Street, Gillingham. Chatham Choral Society, J.S. Bach: To us a child is born, Three Far Eastern Carols, Traditional Carols. Tickets £4, children under 12 £1, at the door.
- December 9th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.00am, Snodland Cemetery. 6 miles. Dogs on leads.
- December 9th – Countryside Event. Cuxton Walk, 10.00am to 12 noon at Cuxton Woods. Ring 812196 to book.

- December 10th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club (see 3rd December).
- December 10th – Medway Organ Club. Artist Jean Martyn. 7.30pm, Parkwood Community Centre. Admission £3. Contact telephone number 01474 812466.
- December 11th – Gillingham and District Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society. CHRISTMAS PARTY.
- December 11th – Rainham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild. CHRISTMAS PARTY. 2.00pm, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Gatekeeper Close, Rainham.
- December 11th – Medway Antique and Collectors Club, Annual Christmas Dinner.
- December 11th – Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club. 8.00 to 10.00pm. The Red Cross (Gillingham Centre), 31 Balmoral Road, Gillingham. Ring 862673 for details.
- December 12th – Bredhurst WI. Mr Brian Higbee. A Musical Evening. Competition: An Item in Coral. 7.30pm in the Village Hall.
- December 12th – Rainham Flower Club (Kent) Christmas Party. 7.30 to 9.30pm, Upchurch Village Hall.
- December 13th – Wigmore Thursday Club. Christmas Quiz. 2.00pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. For people over the age of 50. For further information telephone 235507.
- December 13th – Wigmore MADS are holding their annual Carol Concert CHRISTMAS JOY in St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. 8.00pm. Tickets £4, £3.50 concessions, includes coffee and mince pies. BOX OFFICE – Sue 370639.
- December 14th – Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society. Sir John Hawkins Hospital, Chatham (with slides). Miss Jean Lear. 7.15pm, Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham.
- December 14th – Mid-Kent Astronomical Society. Christmas Fun Quiz and Party. Bring food and drink and yourself.
- December 15th – Sittingbourne Orpheus Choral Society. Music for Christmas. 7.30pm, Swallows Leisure Centre, Sittingbourne. Our annual Christmas concert. As well as carols the choir will

be singing several festive pieces including Holsti Christmas Day. Subject to availability tickets may be obtained from Mrs Georgina Pocock – telephone 01634 233521. £7.50 each and £5 for concessions.


- December 15th – Maidstone & Medway Cat Club. 1.00pm, Black Lion, Gillingham. For further details telephone 361645.
- December 15th – Countryside Event. Birdwatching Cruise. Book and pay in advance. £17, ring 378987.
- December 15th – Countryside Event Children's Nature Day, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10am to 12 noon, making natural Christmas decorations, ages 5-13 years (under 8 must be accompanied by an adult). Book in advance 812196.
- December 16th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 2.00pm, Lamberhurst Car Park. 5½ miles. Dogs on leads.
- December 17th – Rainham Evening WI. Letter 'L' Entertainment on Lives of Elsie & Doris Walters 'Down Memory Lane'. Shirley Goodhew and Brenda Gilham-Hill. 7.30pm, Platters Lodge, Highfield Road, Rainham.
- December 17th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club (see 3rd December).
- December 17th – Countryside Event Talk, 7.30pm, Riverside Country Park 'Geology of the south east' by Peter Goulding. £1.50, book in advance 378987.
- December 18th – Medway Scrabble (see 4th December).
- December 19th – Wigmore Afternoon Townswomen's Guild. CHRISTMAS PARTY.
- December 20th – Rainham WI. Drama Group. CHRISTMAS PARTY.
- December 20th – Wigmore Thursday Club. Carols & Readings (see 13th December).
- December 20th – Tales from the Mariners, The Three Mariners, Lower Rainham, 7.30pm. £4.00 (Con £2.00) 'You may not believe this ...' Open house, sponsored storytelling in aid of Demelza House, adults only.

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RONALD NORMAN NEALE

The relatives of Ronald Norman Neale have never been traced since he was buried in Penzance cemetery, Cornwall, in 1944. Mr Neale died, aged 20 years, on Sunday February 20th when HMS *Warwick* sank having been attacked by a German U-boat off the Cornish coast. The son of James Harry and Linaol (Lydia) Neale, Ronald was born at 121 Station Road, Rainham, on June 2nd 1923. Mrs Neale (née Budge) had been married before and her first married name was Sinclair. At some time the family lived at Grove Park, London.

Ronald Neale's parents would have been informed that their son had died at sea and would probably never have known that he actually had been brought ashore and had a grave in Cornwall. The HMS *Warwick* Association would like to trace any relatives of Ronald Neale so that they may be included in future remembrance services held for the 66 crew who lost their lives, just under half the ship's complement. If you have any information that would help with this search please contact Mrs Kathleen Pearce on phone or fax 01736 710983.

WAKELEY JUNIOR SCHOOL XMAS FAYRE

Wakeley Junior School's XMAS FAYRE will be held on Friday 7th December at 3.15pm.

There will be many festive stalls, sweets made by the children, cakes and plenty of other sideshows, tombolas and raffles, with some great prizes to be won. Santa is also scheduled to make an appearance. Refreshments will be available throughout the event. Admission will be 30p and everyone is welcome.

COMMUNITY FUND SUPPORTS COMMUNITY CENTRE IN WIGMORE

There are celebrations afoot in Wigmore with the announcement of a grant of £92,500 towards refurbishment and improvement work on St Matthew's Community Centre in Drewery Drive, Wigmore. The work will be carried out by Hoo builder, W.A. Willson Ltd, and involves re-roofing the Centre and many improvements.

With this grant, St Matthew's Church Roof & Renew Appeal has raised over £400,000 towards a target of £600,000. The total project involves

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re-roofing the whole complex of Church and Community Centre as well as improving the facilities. This grant from the Community Fund allows the work on the Community Centre to commence on 8th October.

RAINHAM MINDERS (For Registered Childminders)

The Rainham Minders meet once a fortnight on a Tuesday at the Methodist Church at the corner of Station Road and Wakeley Road from 9.30 to 11.30. Any childminder who has not yet joined, it is well worth a visit. There are lots of activities for the children including drawing, cutting and sticking. It's a good opportunity to speak to others, have a drink and for the children to socialise. The group will be celebrating its first birthday in January.

Dates for 2002 see the Diary. Commences 2002 Tuesday 15th January, then alternate Tuesdays. Term-time only.

For more details contact Claire, 01634 376270 or Lorraine 01634 362520.

DECEMBER 13th

Wigmore MADS present CHRISTMAS JOY at St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, at 8.00pm.

Christmas is nearly here and we are holding our annual Carol Concert again. It will be an enjoyable evening of Christmas music old and new for all the family to enjoy. Do come and join us.

Tickets £4, £3.50 concessions, including coffee and mince pie, available from Sue Burrows, Medway 370639.

ST MARGARET'S GRAND DRAW

The Grand Draw of St Margaret's Autumn Bazaar on 27th October made a profit of £1,010 towards the church roof appeal. I would like to thank all the Traders, Shopkeepers and Rob Kinney (who donated the first prize of £500 TV) for their warm support and generosity, and for putting up with my persistent pleadings!

Bev Walsh (Secretary to The Friends of St Margaret's Church)

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

Between 1945 and 1952 Brian Beach made a number of paintings and drawings of the marshes alongside the Medway and Swale. They were later published in a book by Kent County Council. Mr Beach was particularly fascinated by the isolated cottages of the marshes including Codd's House on Chetney Marshes which he and a friend came across on a cold, grey day in November 1945 whilst walking on the sea wall alongside the Swale. Fifty six years later, also on a November day, I myself visited Chetney Marshes.

I made my way via Upchurch and Lower Halstow and, just before reaching the Old Ferry Road, parked my car near Willow Cottages. From here I could look out over Chetney Marshes towards the Medway, the Hoo Peninsular and the Isle of Grain. The marshes are used largely for the grazing of sheep, are divided by dykes and other water courses and are dotted with the remains of old wind pumps.

Having dropped down from the high ground onto the marshes themselves I disturbed a number of herons searching for eels and other prey in the dykes and came across flocks of mallard, teal and lapwing in the flooded areas of the marshes. There were rabbits all over the place. I spotted a total of three kestrels and one marsh harrier hunting for voles and other mammals among the extensive grassland. I was particularly pleased to have seen two coveys of grey (or common) partridge. Clearly there are plenty of seeds and insects for the birds on land which being a site of special scientific interest, is sprayed with neither herbicides nor pesticides. Little groups of skylarks were also feeding on the grassland.

At the Old Counter Wall I turned left and headed for the sea wall. I passed by some farm buildings which were the home of starlings, collared doves and domestic chickens. The buildings consisted of a corrugated asbestos barn and two large grain silos and were near the site of Old Chitney and New Chitney cottages. Paintings of these former cottages appear in Brian Beach's book. Particularly poignant was his description of New Chitney. He referred, among other things, to 'a little iron fireplace, now bare and

cheerless among the grit and dereliction of everything' and 'a wooden toilet hut lying on its side among the tangles'. The two cottages would have been occupied by farming families but today the farmer lives in less isolation and visits his outbuildings and his scattered sheep in a pick-up truck.

I walked along the sea wall with Bedlams Bottom on my right. Feeding in the creek I could see flocks of widgeon and shellduck and waders such as dunlin, knot, little ringed plover, oyster catcher and curlew. Beached in the shadow of Raspberry Hill were about a dozen old wooden barges. On reaching the road I looked back over the Marsh. I could make out the site of Codd's House on the opposite bank of the Swale to Rushenden Hill. After exploring the deserted house Brian Beach recorded that 'upstairs and down there hung a damp murkiness which served finally to confirm that the house had been altogether forsaken and had been left to the marsh winds'.

Shepherds are graziers and their families may no longer live on Chetney Marshes. But still to be found there are the sheep, the wild birds, the dykes, the sea walls, the open skies and the marsh winds.

Joe Ennis

HOW WAS BERENGRAVE LANE SO NAMED?

I am fortunate in having some of the notes of the late Mr W.J. Smith, and Mr Stuart L. Jelley who both wrote about the history of Rainham. The former will be remembered by older residents as Headteacher of the Council School in Solomon Road who then took over the new Senior Boys' School in Orchard Street when it opened in 1933. The latter was a proprietor of a large outfitters shop on the corner of Pudding Road, now the restaurant, whose father Edwin Jelley with Marshall Harvey developed that area of Rainham Mark which bears their names. In one of Mr Smith's writings he explained the origin of various place names including Berengrave which he said took its name from the 'Berens' family who were well known in Kent. I had no reason to doubt its accuracy until I recently examined a map dated 1801. This was fairly small scale and the roads were not named but the one which continued to the river directly opposite to the one leading to Bredhurst and Wigmore showed a

'Burying Grave' about a quarter of the way down the lane and the words spanned both sides of the road. I emphasise that this was small scale but the wording is just south of a 'link' to a road which I take to Bloor's Lane and presume to be the present pathway.

The rather unusual description may or may not have significance because Roman burial grounds are marked on later maps as 'Roman Cemeteries' as is the one just east of the road to Motney Hill where many valuable articles were found, some of which are said to be in Eastgate Museum, Rochester. This was distinctly separate from the seven Roman burial urns found on the Saltings to the north of Rainham Creek between Bartlett Creek and Nor Marsh in January 1881 which contained human remains.

On the other hand, the Manor of Queencourt comprised some 485 acres of arable, pasture and marsh land, much of which was either side of Berengrave Lane, with a water mill beside Rainham Creek 'at the end of a little lane to the east of Bloor's Place', probably now Motney Hill Road. There were about 36 acres in Upchurch and Lower Halstow. With the exception of 'Berengrave House' and 30 acres the rest of the property was sold by Mr 'Squire' Walter and his sisters to various purchasers in 1900.

Berengrave Lane was known to many older residents as Walter's Lane, and the Squire owned various other properties in Rainham, including The Parsonage. Going back into history the Manor was given by Queen Alianore (sometimes Eleanor) wife of Henry III to the Master and Brethren of St Katharine's Hospital in 1273. This was to re-establish a charity to support six poor bachelors and six poor spinsters. I do not know if the institution still exists but last century its title was The Royal Hospital and Collegiate Church of St Catherine providing schools for boys and girls, a guild for past scholars, and a chapter consisting of a master, three brothers and three sisters. The Queen's nurses had a house and offices there.

I've strayed somewhat from the origin of the name of 'Berengrave' but I have tried to show that this was a very important area somewhat independent of the village, although only four houses are shown as built in the lane up to 1901, a lot of workers must have been employed. The population of Rainham in 1801

was 722. On the other hand I did wonder if a 'Burying Grave' might have been placed remote from the village when residents were afraid of infection during the Plague. This seems unlikely in such close proximity to the Manor House but perhaps others may cast light on the subject.

So many place names have been corrupted over the years that I can quite easily see how 'Burying Grave Lane' became 'Berengrave' but I'm afraid that readers must decide!

The present Berengrave Lane is very different from that which I frequented as a young boy in the early 1920s. It was then a very eerie road at night with no pavements, the wind howling through high overgrowing trees and only three single mantle gas lamps from the top down to the railway line. If you reached Berengrave House you'd hear footsteps on crackling brittle dead holly leaves and then suddenly the old donkey would start braying which made an already nervous youngster take off. There was also the popular legend about the headless horseman who galloped down the lane at midnight. If I had known that there was also a Burying Grave lower down I'd have been petrified!

P.S. I have been reminded that some older readers consider that the main house in the Lane should be spelt Berengrove and not Berengrave, so I consulted Mr Peter Sargent at the Map Shop who, having checked with the Ordnance Survey Agency, found that the five maps issued between 1878 and 1933 showed the residence spelt with an 'a' but those issued in 1938 and 1959 (just before it was demolished) had an 'o'. The current map shows the Council 'plant area' off Bloor's Lane as Berengrove Nursery. Cozenton Farm, which was next door to Berengrove? House, was described as Corzenton on the Deeds in 1888 whereas the map of 1891 shows it as Cozenton. There is an area at the bottom of Blue Bell Hill called Cossington which probably had the same origin.

Many roads and place names have been changed over the years, even the village itself has apparently been Rygingaham, Raegingaham, Raenham, Raynham, Reinham, and Renham before getting to Rainham.

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December 22nd — Countryside Event Children's Nature Day, Riverside Country Park, 10.30 to 12 noon. Nature awareness activities and crafts, 4-12 years (under 8 must be accompanied). £1.50 book in advance 378987.
December 26th — Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 11.00am East Malling car park by Rail Bridge. Boxing Day walk if possible, pub stop. 5 miles. Dogs on leads.
December 30th — Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.00am Bush Road, Cuxton. 6 miles. Hilly. Dogs on leads.

JANUARY 2002

January 1st — Countryside Event. New Year's Day walk, 10 to 12 noon, Capstone Farm Country Park. Book in advance 812196.
January 2nd — Friendship Circle, Parkwood Christian Fellowship. 2.15pm.
January 3rd — Children's Nature Day, 10 to 12 noon. Capstone Farm Country Park, Nature awareness activities for 5-13 years (under 8 must be accompanied). £1.50, book in advance 812196.
January 6th — Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.00am, Farningham Village Church. 6 miles. No dogs.
January 7th — Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club (see 3rd December).
January 8th — Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club (see 11th December).
January 8th — Rainham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild. Wind of Change — Mr Ogle. (see 11th December).
January 8th — Medway Antiques & Collectors Club. Mrs Julia Page — a talk with the intriguing title 'A Miscellany of Scottish Beauty'. 7.30 for 8.00pm information telephone 366586, 851512
January 11th — Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society. Some Kent Ghosts, their Haunts and Stories (illustrated). Mr Dennis Chambers (see 14th December).
January 11th — Mid-Kent Astronomical Society. Pete Parish, constellation of the month. 8.00pm,
Bredhurst Village Hall. Contact number 308035.
January 13th — Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.30am Hollingbourne Station. 5 miles. Dogs on leads.
January 14th — Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club (see 3rd December).
January 15th — Rainham Minders (see 4th Dec).
January 16th — Bredhurst Garden Club. Mike Collins, talk on 'Photography'. HYACINTH SHOW, 8.00pm, Village Hall.
January 18th — Gillingham Recorded Music Society. On the lighter side — a vocal miscellany. Denis Page (West Wickham RMS) (see 7th December).
January 20th — Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.00am Crown Point Inn, near Seal. 6 miles. No dogs.
January 21st — Medway Spinners Dyers & Weavers Association. Spinning. 7.30 to 9.30pm at the Annexe (Urchins Playgroup) building in Marlborough Road, Gillingham.
January 21st — Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club (see 3rd December).
January 22nd — Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club (see 11th December).
January 22nd — Countryside Event, Birdwatching Cruise, £17, book and pay in advance 378987.
January 23rd — Wigmore Afternoon Townswomen's Guild. Presentation, Competition: Ornate Jam Spoon. 1.45 to 4.15pm in the Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore.
January 24th to February 2nd — Medway Little Theatre, 'Up 'n' Under' by John Godber, 7.30pm. Tickets 400322.
January 25th — The Medway Geographical Society. Upper Medway, Mr J. Morgan. 7.30 to 9.00pm. Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham.
January 25th — Mid-Kent Astronomical Society. Contact 01634 308035.
January 27th — Medway Towns Footpath Group, 2.00pm, car park Maidstone Road, Wigmore, adjacent A278, 5 miles. Dogs on leads.
January 27th — Countryside Event. Winter bird walk. 10 to 12 noon, Ambley Woods and Darland Banks. Book in advance 812196.

Continued on page 13

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