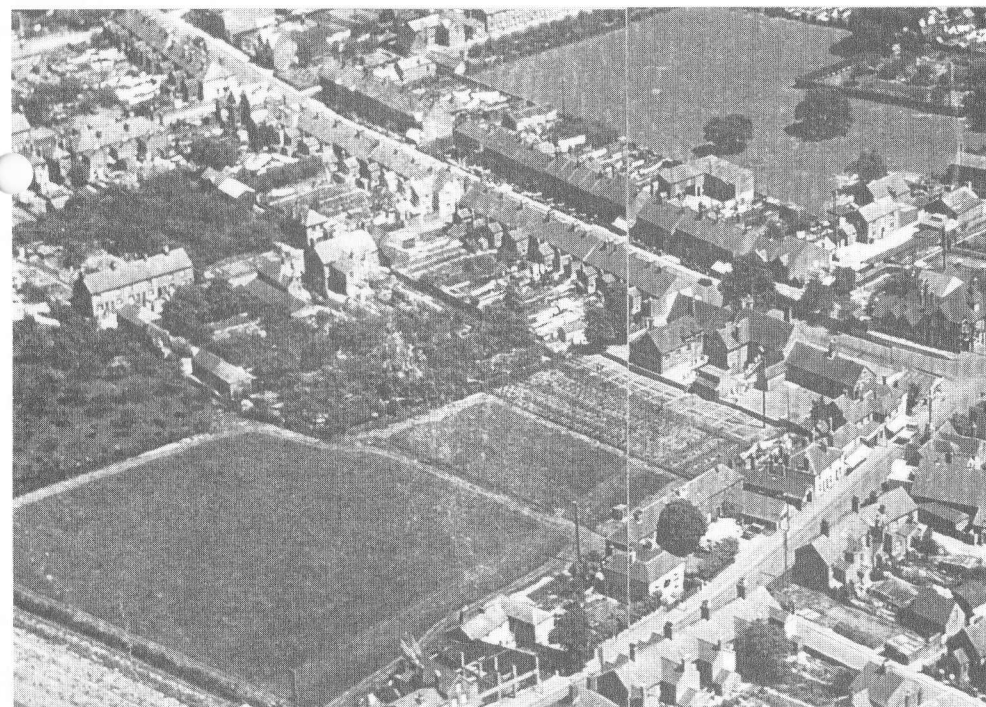


ACTION FORUM

APRIL 2002
NUMBER 366

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA



A 1928 aerial view of central Rainham showing the site of the Shopping Centre built in the early 1970s. Ten shops are to close for six months for structural repairs. They were built on land that had been used as allotments for the boys' school and as an orchard (see page 8 for an article by Freddie Cooper).

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Next Issue: May 4th 2002
Copy Date: Ap 16th Sm Ads Ap 19th

Editorial: Mrs Barbara Mackay Miller,
5 Meresborough Cotts, Tel: 231307.

Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller,
5 Meresborough Cotts, Tel: 231307.

Editorial

As for the past four years in March, we have just returned from our holiday 'down under'. New Zealand again this year and it was great. The weather was sunny and quite hot enough for us, shorts and T-shirts (for me anyway) and everything worked like a dream. When we decided to visit an active volcano island 50 miles offshore we managed to get the last couple of places on the boat and the sea was calm. We arrived, quite by chance, at Cape Kidnappers on just the right day for the tide to take a trip along the beach on an open trailer to visit a garnet colony, the chair lifts at Whakapapa were open on a gloriously sunny day, despite the forecasts of rain and high winds, to take us up yet another volcano and at one point a lady chased us two blocks down the street to return a 20 dollar note we had dropped. On the way home we had four days in Singapore, surely the most efficient city in the world. Our plane touched down at five minutes past eight in the evening and at that point we had no idea where we would be staying that night, yet by 9.45pm we had disembarked from a 747 Jumbo Jet (a very slow process normally), passed through passport control and immigration, collected our luggage from the baggage hall, selected and booked a hotel, travelled 27km into the city, checked in and were making a cup of tea in our room. Unfortunately this was all rather spoilt when we reached Rainham after travelling for eighteen hours plus from Singapore. We came back by train from Heathrow, it took about three and a half hours from touchdown which was not bad but we then had to walk up Station Road with our luggage to collect the car. By this time we were both wanting the loo so, stupidly, we left the heaviest case on the corner of Longley Road (at 10 o'clock at night) for literally less than five minutes whilst we nipped into the Bookshop to collect the car key and use the facilities. You guessed it, when we came out the case had gone. Whoever took it is welcome to the clothes, books and odds and ends, I cannot imagine they will be of any use to them unless they are middle aged and leaning towards the overweight, but what I am most upset about is that all our holiday film was in that case. If anyone knows where five rolls of undeveloped Kodak film has been dumped I would be very grateful for its return, it is the complete record of our holiday.

Whilst on the subject of 'good citizenship' or otherwise we have received an anonymous letter (therefore I will not publish it) this month but it does make a valid point about the amount of litter we have in our streets and parks. How can we encourage more community spirit? It is such a pity when pleasant places are spoiled by unsightly mounds of takeaway cartons, empty cans and bottles and general litter. Chewing gum is illegal in Singapore, how they enforce it I do not know, but their streets are clean.

However, back to reality now, the holiday is over, I hope we soon have some of the sunshine and warm days we have become used to and that we will be able to enjoy our countryside to its full this year. Until May have a happy month.

Correspondence

OLD ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH

Dear Editor,

Please convey my sincere thanks to all those readers who either telephoned or wrote to me regarding the details of the Old St Matthew's Church in Woodside, Wigmore.

I shall have to think of something else whilst I am in the building.

I cannot but think that with a bill of £400,000 for a new roof in Drewery Drive there must be those who wished they never moved!!

Thanks a lot.

Yours sincerely,
David Lucas
01634 233538

MEMORIES OF RAINHAM

Dear Editor,

I found Freddie Cooper's article on the naming of Berengrave Lane very interesting in your December issue, and was wondering if there is more information on 'the Lane'.

During the 50s and 60s the Lane was an important part of my life, all my free time was spent down 'the Lane', which acted as a conduit for the chalk pit, wall, damson ally and the cricket ground. But whatever the day's adventure it always started by finding an empty Tizer bottle and returning it to Miss Hunter's Shop for the 3d deposit to buy some sweets.

Looking back nearly 50 years I had some great times, I have plenty of stories to tell my grandchildren.

I live in Cornwall now and I am very involved with my village cricket club, sometimes my thoughts take me back to the days watching Johnny Richardson and his team playing at the cricket ground, he must have had one of the best teams in the area. Sometimes I would help the players pull the roller; the ground was always in immaculate condition. I can remember one big occasion when the club staged a testimonial match for Doug Wright the Kent Captain of the day;

I wonder what year that was?

I would be very interested if you have any information on the history of Rainham Cricket Club and Berengrave Lane.

Yours sincerely,
Keith Goldsmith
2 Cowling Gardens
Menheniot, Liskeard
Cornwall. PL14 3QJ.
01579 346248

Editor: David Wood is preparing a history of Rainham Cricket Club to celebrate its 150th anniversary. He would welcome any contributions either verbal or written and may be contacted on 01634 370215.

MEDWAY SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Dear Editor,

The Medway School of English organises language holidays for German and other Continental students since 1987. Many of our host families are now taking in students for 15 years! Our students come to Rainham for two or three weeks and they follow an organised programme. The students have bus passes and they spend all day with the group. They are aged between 11 and 20 years and they come at Easter and various dates between July until October.

We are now looking for extra host families in the Rainham area as we expect to have larger groups than last year.

We offer excellent rates of payment. In addition, our host families really enjoy the time when the students are here. In many cases real friendships have developed.

We always offer a Farewell Party in the Roffen Club in Rochester at the end of each stay.

We ask our host families to provide breakfast, a packed-lunch and a warm evening meal.

Please contact us! We are happy to visit you and provide you with all details. We can also give you references so you hear what other families say about our organisation and our students.

Yours faithfully
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CALEDONIAN ASSOCIATION

May 1, through Action Forum, advise all readers that The Medway & District Caledonian Association has a new venue for all future Thursday evening dances.

From Thursday 4th April we will be moving from Upchurch Village Hall to All Saints' Church Hall, Church Green, Frindsbury. Times and cost remain the same, 8.00pm to 10.30pm/£1.50 respectively. Beginners are made most welcome, so please come and join us if you can.

A reminder that a weekly Tea Dance is held every Monday afternoon at Bredhurst Village Hall from 1.30 to 3.30pm, cost £1.00; once again, beginners are welcome.

Tuesday evenings we have a beginners class at the Wakeley Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham, from 8.00pm to 10.00pm, cost £1.50. Bring a friend and come along, or come by yourself and make some new ones!

Finally we have a thriving children's class who also meet at the Wakeley Church Hall on Fridays from 5.30 to 6.30pm, cost 50p. Boys and girls from age 6 who like to dance and need to use up some energy come along!

For further information on any of the above please contact Sandy on 571624. Look forward to seeing LOTS of you SOON!

BARN DANCE

The PTFA of Rainham Mark Grammar School, Pump Lane, are holding a Barn Dance on Saturday 27th April at 7.30pm. There will be a bar and small snacks. The caller is Chris Woodward. Tickets are £6 adults and £3 students. Phone 281043.

DISTRIBUTION

Many thanks to those who continue to help with our door to door distribution and the new volunteers who came forward last month. We are still in need of more help, so I repeat. Even if you regularly receive a copy of Action Forum through your letterbox each month, this does not mean we cannot use your assistance. If you can spare some time during the first week of each month please ring either 371591 (shop hours) or 231307. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Diary 2002

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

No charge is made for Diary entries
Diary Copy Date: 16th April 2002

- April 6th – Gillingham Horticultural Society Spring Show, 2.30-4.30pm, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. Ring 234734 for details.
- April 7th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, 2.00pm, The Green, Baddlesmere.
- April 8th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club, 2.00 to 4.00pm, Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore. We mostly play bingo, have a raffle, tea and biscuits. People over 50 years of age welcome, transport can sometimes be arranged. Ring 362662 for details.
- April 9th – Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club, 8.00 to 10.00pm, The Red Cross (Gillingham Centre), 31 Balmoral Road. Ring 862673 for details.
- April 9th – Medway Antique and Collectors Club, 7.30 for 8.00pm, St George Hotel, 7-8 New Road Avenue, Chatham. The Impressionists, Mr Gerry Harris.
- April 9th – Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society, 7.30 to 10.00pm, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, Rainham. Fuchsia Show preparations. Paul Heavens, ring 853864 for details.
- April 10th – Rainham Flower Club, 7.30 to 9.30pm, Upchurch Village Hall. Workshop, ring 362123 for details.
- April 10th – Bredhurst Women's Institute, 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall. Pilates, Sarah Wilson. Details from Gill Smith 372250.
- April 11th – Wigmore Thursday Club, 2.00pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, for people over the age of 50, Bingo Session. Ring 235507 for details.
- April 12th – Gillingham and Rainham Local History

- Society AGM. 7.15pm, Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham.
- April 12th – Mid-Kent Astronomical Society. Pete Parish – Constellation of the month, 8.00pm, Bredhurst Village Hall.
- April 13th – Jumble Sale, Scout Hut, Berengrave Lane, 10 to 12 noon. In aid of Scout Funds. Admission Free. Ring 375560 for details.
- April 13th – Friends of St Margaret's Church, Boot Fair, Orchard Room, Millennium Centre, Rainham, 10.00 to 12 noon (£6 per table). Ring 235530 to book. Admission 25p.
- April 13th – Friends of St Margaret's Church, Knowledge and Nibbles evening, 7.30pm. £4.00 per person, 8 to a table (BYOB). Ring 235530 for tickets.
- April 14th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, 2.30pm, South Park, Maidstone.
- April 15th – Wigmore WRVS (see 8th April).
- April 15th – Rainham Evening WI, 7.30pm, Platters Lodge, Highfield Road, Rainham. Letter 'P'. The Tiller Girls – Jackie Simmonds. Ring 372479
- April 16th – Gillingham Horticultural Society, Floral Art Group, 7.30 to 9.00pm, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. Let's Create a Picture – collage plus show review, details from 234734.
- April 17th – Bredhurst Garden Club, 8.00pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Maisie Holmes talk – Adventure Continued.
- April 17th – Medway Camcorder Club, 7.30pm, Medway Motor Yacht Club. Know Your Camcorder. Ring 305490 for details.
- April 17th – Wigmore Afternoon Townswomen's Guild, 1.45 to 4.15pm, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside. Mrs Letchford. Ring 852297 for details.
- April 18th – Wigmore Thursday Club, Roy Murrent, slides and talk 'Old Medway Pubs' (see 11th April).
- April 18th – Rainham (Afternoon) WI. 1.45pm, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham. Sailing Barges in their Heyday, Mr T. Farnham.
- April 19th – Gillingham Recorded Music Society, 7.15 to 9.15pm, St Augustine's Church Room (top of Rock Avenue), Gillingham.

- April 19th – Wigmore Community and Residents Association AGM, 7.30pm, Fairview Junior School Hall, all members welcome. To join ring 361975 or 378769.
- April 20th – Quiz Night at Oast House Community Centre, 8.00pm, teams of 6, all welcome. Ring 374558 for details.
- April 21st – Medway Towns Footpath Group, 2.30pm, Chilham car park.
- April 22nd – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club (see 8th April).
- April 23rd – Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club (see 9th April).
- April 23rd – Rainham Minders, 9.30 to 11.30am, Methodist Church Hall, Station Road, Rainham, All registered childminders welcome, ring Claire 376270 for details.
- April 24th – Gillingham Horticultural Society, Lloyds Social Club, Featherby Road, 8.00pm, Quiz Night. Tables of 6 £3.00 per person, proceeds to Kent Air Ambulance. Ring 360624 for details.
- April 25th – Wigmore Thursday Club, Sales Stall and Clueless Crossword (see 11th April).
- April 25th – Tales from the Mariners, 7.30pm at The Three Mariners, Lower Rainham Road, £4.00, 3 Mariners Home Brew with Rick Sayer, Tony Edwards, Tony & De Joyce, Francis Kendall.
- April 25th – Rainham & District Dollshouse and Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, St Thomas of Canterbury Church Hall, London Road, Rainham. Ring 312038 for details.
- April 25th – Wigmore MADS concert 'Celebrations', 8.00pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Wigmore. Tickets £4.50, £4.00 concessions. Box Office 370639.
- April 26th – Medway Geographical Society, 7.30 to 9.00pm, Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham. Venice and Tuscany – Miss C. Cohen.
- April 26th – Mid-Kent Astronomical Society, The History of Radio Astronomy – Malcolm Jones (see 12th April).
- April 27th – Rainham Mark Grammar School PTF A Barn Dance, 7.30pm. Tickets £6 adults, £3 students. Caller Chris Woodward. Bar and snacks, details phone 281043.
- April 28th – Medway Towns Footpath Group,


- 10.00am, Penenden Heath car park.
- April 28th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club (see 8th April).
- May 1st – The Friendship Circle, 2.15pm, Parkwood Christian Fellowship, contact Mary Tindall 365758 for details.
- May 1st – Medway Camcorder Club, Canterbury, Cornwallis, Crayside (see 17th April).
- May 1st – Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm, Pavilion, Cricket Ground, Berengrave Lane. Colourful bulbs for all Seasons, Mrs J. Talboys. Details from 387176.
- May 2nd – Wigmore Thursday Club. Talk – Royal Marines – Revd Frank Kent (see 11th April).
- May 2nd – Wigmore MADS concert 'Celebrations', 8.00pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Wigmore. Tickets £4.50, £4.00 concessions. Box Office 370639.
- May 3rd – Gillingham Recorded Music Society, Musical Landscapes – a journey in words and music, Harold and Dorothy Rogers (see 19th April).
- May 4th – Medway Camcorder Club Annual Video Show, 2.30pm, Tourist Information Centre, Rochester. Tickets £3.50, ring 371570 for details.
- May 5th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, 2.30pm, Penenden Heath car park.
- May 7th – Rainham Minders (see 23rd April).
- May 7th – Floral Art Group – Ikebana – own interpretation (see 16th April).
- May 8th – Medway Evacuees Reunion Group, 1.00 to 4.00pm, Riverside Indoor Bowling Green, Dock Road, Chatham. Ring 814922 for details.
- May 8th – Rainham Flower Club, 7.30 to 9.30pm, Upchurch Village Hall. Demonstration, Nikki Leadson 'Some Enchanted Evening'. Ring 362123 for details.
- May 8th – Bredhurst Women's Institute, 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Resolutions Meeting, Church Shop Dress Show. Details from Gill Smith 372250.
- May 9th – Wigmore Thursday Club, John Symonds – Music of the Movies.
- May 9th to 18th – Medway Little Theatre present Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw, 7.30pm. Box Office 01634 400322.

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COMMUNICATION ... LISTENING TO GOD AND PASSING IT ON!

Women living and working in Medway and beyond
are invited to attend a Women's Day Conference on
Saturday 11th May 2002. It is to be held in The
St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Gatekeeper Chase,
Rainham, Gillingham (behind St Margaret's Church
in Rainham) and will begin at 10.00am finishing at
4.00pm.

The day has been organised by members from the
four churches in the Parish of South Gillingham
together with representatives from other Parishes in
the Gillingham area. It costs £6.00 (£4.00
concessions) - participants need to bring a packed
lunch and drinks will be provided.

The Keynote speaker will be Rev. Anne Hibbert,
who is Advisor on Mission and Spirituality for The
Bible Reading Fellowship. This involves working
alongside churches and individuals, helping them to
explore ways of deepening their relationship with
God through prayer and Bible Study. Anne also has
lots of experience in helping people speak to their
friends, neighbours, families and colleagues about
their Christian Faith.

There will be discussion groups, facilitated by
women who live and work locally, focussing on
different contexts when Christian faith may be
relevantly shared and displays by organisations
involved in the areas of communication which will be
addressed at the conference as well as a bookstall
provided by the CLC Bookshop in Chatham. Fairly
traded products - Tearcraft (crafts) Traidcraft (foods)
- will also be available to purchase.

Please reserve your place in advance. For further
information and booking forms, please contact Jill
Lovell. Tel. 01634 230780

HOME-START - Supporting families

Do you have 2 to 3 hours a month to give to a local
voluntary organisation?

Home-Start Medway supports families with young
children, and is looking for people to join its
management committee. The committee currently
includes professionals from public services and
individuals from the Medway community. Our main
requirement is that you have an interest in the well

being of families. Experience in the support and
supervision of staff or in finance or business, would
be helpful.

We are a friendly group who meet on the third
Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm to oversee the
running of the scheme, making decisions regarding
policy, staffing and financial matters.

If you are interested and would like further
information please contact Marilyn Lewis (Chair) on
01634 570717.

WINTER WARMERS SHELTER

The society is providing safe emergency night shelter
for the genuine homeless. We endeavour to assist the
clients in finding accommodation within six to eight
weeks and giving them assistance with benefits and
any drug or alcohol problems. Also we provide
education and recreation facilities. **Volunteers** are
needed to befriend and help in various ways - we
need people who care about people - can you provide
a listening ear - help with doctors visits or shopping -
administrative skills plus arts and crafts are wanted -
all you need is a few hours of spare time - training
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Contact Hilary or Chris, 01634 405566/409310.

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CELEBRATIONS

THURSDAY 25th APRIL & THURSDAY 2nd MAY
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St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive,
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR MARCH

Rochester is situated beside the tidal River Medway whilst Canterbury sits on the fresh water Great Ouse. The flora and fauna of the two rivers are therefore somewhat different. In Nature Notes for March and April I compare the wildlife of Kent's two cathedral cities and, in particular, the two rivers associated with them.

In March I walked along the River Medway between Rochester Bridge and the M2 bridge. The route is part of the Centenary Walk created in 1989 to commemorate 100 years of local government in Rochester. Canterbury set up a walk along the Great Ouse at the same time to mark the same event. The tide was in as I commenced my walk along the Medway. The predominant plant in the mud of the river was cord grass, one of the pioneer plants which take root in open mud. About ten lapwings were perched on Rochester Pier – all facing upstream, into the wind and waiting for the tide to go out. There were lots of black headed gulls either floating on the water or standing on boats. Mute swans and mallard were also in evidence. Three cormorants were preening themselves on buoys. Presumably the fish that had attracted them to the River Medway were whiting. When inland lakes are frozen, great crested grebes can also be seen diving for fish in the river.

In the shadow of the M2 bridge I came to Baty's Marsh (formerly Borstal Marsh), a local nature reserve and one of the few remaining salt marshes in the Rochester area. On the marsh grow such typical salt water plants as sea purslane, sea beet, sea club-root, and sea arrow grass. A solitary carrion crow was the only bird I could see among the flotsam and jetsam covering Baty's Marsh. In summer the mauve flowers of sea lavender give some colour to the marsh but any reader wishing to see the flowers of a salt marsh in summer would probably find it more convenient to go to Horrid Hill at the Countryside Park on the Lower Rainham Road.

As I was retracing my steps the tide was gradually going out. Feeding along the edges of the river were

redshanks, a shelduck and a solitary grey heron. The latter was presumably looking for crabs. About half way along the Esplanade I had a nice view of the castle and cathedral, St Margaret's Church, Rochester Bridge and Frindsbury Church.

I returned to the leafy area (at least in summer) of the castle and cathedral. The predominant trees were deciduous ones such as sycamore, horse chestnut and beech and evergreens for example, yew, holm oak, holly and cedar of Lebanon. There is an impressive double row of London plane trees, about 100 years old, in The Vines. It was good to note that a long line of tall Leylandii trees formerly in the cathedral's refectory garden have been felled. Attractive views of the garden can now be had from the upper floor of Francis Iles' picture galleries.

The houses on the south of the cathedral are mainly of red brick surrounded by ragstone walls. Many belong to the King's School and it occurred to me that it is a pity that we can no longer wander among the buildings of King's School, Canterbury. As I meandered alongside the houses and gardens of Rochester I could hear the songs of the mistle thrush, the blackbird, the robin, the dunnoek and the song thrush. Some of those birds would doubtless be already nesting.

Joe Ennis

THE PROBLEMS OF THE SHOPPING CENTRE

The news of the enforced closure of 10 shops within the Rainham Centre has obviously caused consternation among the proprietors and great concern among the public at large. It is understood that those who have received notice from the landlords are Barry's Fruiters, Morecut Butchers, Rainham Health Food Shop, Quidsaver, Boots the Optician, Bookmark, Xpressions, Ascot Flowers and Pet Supplies, who all expect to be closed for about 28 weeks. Some will obviously try to relocate as close to the centre as possible but the immediate problems for shop tenants and their staff is most worrying and the long term impact may also be far reaching.

The letter to 'all tenants' dated 14th March said that 'following the results of soil investigation it has been established that remedial works are required to

the centre which would commence on 1st May'. Of course such a disruption in the pattern of Rainham shopping has given rise to much conjecture in fertile minds particularly as to the cause of the problem which has not been made public and only a minority of residents will remember the buildings on the site pre war.

I was fortunate to mention the situation which has arisen to the well known retired builder Mr Len Bridge only to find that he was actually born in one of the three cottages which is now the 'Nationwide' shop so has an intimate knowledge of the area. His address was then number 14 London Road and if one views the buildings from the opposite side of the road it can be seen that the original external structure of all three cottages has been retained with shop fronts which have been altered over the years. Mr Bridge reminded me that just west of the cottages was the blacksmith's forge thought then to be operated by Bill Arraman. Many of us hung over the half door to watch horses being shod or iron work being made or repaired. Len and I agreed that one never forgets the smell of burning horses hooves as the shoes were fitted and the value which both the smithy and the wheelwright next door were to a mainly agricultural community. These buildings together with a large white ex farmhouse next to the forecourt of Springates the wheelwrights, which was occupied by Mr Bodiam who ran the corn chandlers, now Meridian Spice restaurant, covered most of the present High Street entrance to the shopping centre. The other shops towards Station Road with the exception of Barclay's Bank have mainly the original structures with new fronts.

Mr Bridge recalled that all the old buildings would have had cellars, wells, cesspools and underground water tanks to collect rainwater. He considered that the wells were probably 50 to 60 feet deep, so the water courses were fairly close to the surface although now with heavier extraction they may be lower. The fields at the rear of the properties were young orchards pre war but the land may have previously been used for general agricultural purposes for which farmers dug large holes to obtain chalk to spread on the land and some of which were then used for refuse disposal purposes. The other

problem which has caused constructional difficulties locally relates to clay faults in the chalk sub soil which have to be excavated and refilled with concrete as otherwise the clay will expand and contract in a different manner from chalk.

A very large hole once appeared in the pavement in front of the shop next but one to the western corner of Holding Street and another developed outside the shops opposite to the bottom end of the old Chapel Lane (which is now the cul de sac just east of Mierscourt Road). Len seems to remember a hole suddenly appearing in the car park and most older residents had their own stories of sudden subsidence and the reasons therefore. Perhaps the most dangerous was the one that appeared on the railway line just east of Berengrave Lane which caused a derailment. I have a photo of the trucks.

No one locally seems to be willing to explain the actual cause which has necessitated 'remedial works' but one hopes that this will become apparent as it could have implications upon other buildings in or around the area. In the meantime it must be pure conjecture. Whenever a subsidence occurs north of the Church it is inevitable that the legend of Bloors Place tunnel is resurrected.

Freddie Cooper
25.3.02

FLAMES OF INSPIRATION

The forms for entering items into the Flames of Inspiration Art and Craft Exhibition to be held on Whitsun Weekend, 18th and 19th May 2001, in the Millennium Centre, are now available. They can be collected from St Margaret's Parish Church, Church Office, 10.00am to 12 noon, Monday to Friday or from Church on Sundays. There is no charge for exhibiting.

Last year's exhibition was superb, so come on all you art and craft folk, let's make this year even better. This is not just a 'church thing' it's a 'Rainham Event'. I have heard from a few people already and would be delighted to hear from more. So please, pick up a form and if you have a query call me on 01634 365789.

Pam Ormiston

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RAINHAM'S JUBILEE PAGEANT

Rainham will be hosting several events on Sunday 2nd June to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and we need your support!

The day will start with a Pageant through the streets of Rainham and we are looking for organisations and individuals to take part.

So if you are a Scout Leader, Brown Owl, Band Leader or representative of a local organisation please get in touch.

We are also looking for people to take part in the parade to re-create the fashions from the past 50 years. So if you still have your Teddy Boy or punk outfits why not dust them off and take part in the celebrations!

We are also wanting anyone with a car or motorcycle from the past 50 years to come forward and help make this a day to remember!

If you are interested in taking part please contact Dean Caston on Medway 374183.

Let's show the people of Medway that when it comes to celebrating a national event Rainham leads the way in creating something for all the community to enjoy.

Re RAINHAM'S CORONATION
CELEBRATIONS 1953,
March issue No. 365

I'm in my 68th year, being born and bred in Rainham, Soloman Road Council School, Orchard Street Boys and not forgetting Sunday School with Miss List at that lovely old Church School at the top of Station

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Road. Until, that is, National Service in the Army at the age of 20 (deferred due to Art School studies) took me to foreign parts in the Middle East in 1954. So I can well remember Rainham's contribution to the Coronation of 1953. Especially as in a small way I did my bit.

Freddie Cooper's extremely interesting reminiscences recalled those times. Despite food rationing which was still in force for some foods, limited means in many aspects of life, they were nevertheless very happy and contented times.

In 1953 I was in my next to final year as an NDD student at Medway College of Art. As an art student my somewhat limited expertise at that time was in demand. Part of Rainham's decorations for the great occasion, as mentioned, was the embellishment of the lamp posts down the High Street in the way of a banner hanging from each one, which I made and stencilled EIIR in my bedroom at 140 Hawthorne Avenue, to the displeasure of my mother due to the mess and spots of paint on the lino.

I can't recall how many were made out of Sizzal craft paper and wood, however I do recall that the number fell short of what was originally intended.

On the great day my family and close neighbours down the lower part of Hawthorne Avenue watched the great event on our 9-inch television made bigger by one of those magnifying glasses fixed to the screen. Dad and I spent the morning raising the back row of chairs on bricks and planks of wood, so that everybody had a good view while Mum made countless sausage rolls and pots of tea. My girlfriend Audrey, now my wife of 43 years, who was also an art student in the dress and fashion department, and I sat in the back row — wonderful days.

It's a great shame that not a lot is being done to celebrate the Golden Jubilee, but councils must take some of the blame for imposing so many restrictions concerning street closures which I don't think applied 50 years ago. It's also a great shame that school pupils will not be given the opportunity to purchase a Jubilee Mug from the schools. For the Silver Jubilee in 1977 I organised the sale of KCC mugs for my school at Gravesend where they went like hot cakes.

John K. Austin

Sandown Drive, Rainham

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Diary 2002

May 10th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History
Society, Social Evening, 7.15 to 9.30pm.

May 10th - Mid-Kent Astronomical Society.

May 11th - Women's Day Conference, St Margaret's
Millennium Centre, 10.00am to 4.00pm.

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Christian faith with others, Keynote speaker Rev.
Anne Hibbert, drinks provided, bring a packed
lunch. Please book in advance, £6.00 per person
(£4 concessions). Ring Jill Lovell 01634 230780
for details.

May 12th - Medway Towns Footpath Group,
10.30am, Marden Village car park.

May 13th - Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club.

May 14th - Medway Antique Collectors Club,
Towers & Turrets, Mr John Vigar (see 9th April).

May 14th - Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society, 7.30 to
10.00pm, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way.

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370327 to find out more details.

**Activities in April 2002 at the Rainham Oasthouse
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Every Monday

Rainham Bridge Club, 7.30 to 11.00pm,
contact Audrey Clarke 01634 230370.

Every Tuesday

Badminton, 7.00 to 11.00pm,
contact Laraine 01634 373833.

Every Wednesday

Whist Club, 7.30 to 11.00pm,
contact Mrs K. Naylor 01634 387137.

Gamers Guild, 7.30 to 11.00pm,
contact Brian Swain 01634 310609.

Every Thursday

Rainham Chess Club, 7.30 to 11.00pm,
contact Tom Stonehouse 01634 231374.
Dreamcatchers Line Dancing, 8.00 to 11.00pm,
contact Jim McShane 07870 636211.

Every Sunday

Oast 'Ouse' Oppers Morris Dancing, 12.00 to
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