

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

JULY 2002  
NUMBER 369



Watts The Chemist in Rainham High Street pictured in 1984, see the article on page 8.

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

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

## Editorial

After a patriotic few weeks, first with the Golden Jubilee celebrations, followed immediately by our unexpected but very welcome sporting successes, football, cricket and hopefully tennis, life is now settling down, back to the usual summer routine of garden parties, barbecues and summer fairs. We include all of these in our Diary pages this month. Most, of course, are fund raising events and everyone is very welcome to go and join in the fun, indeed this is why the organisers advertise in Action Forum to attract new participants to help swell their numbers and incidentally profits. We try wherever possible to include a contact phone number, so if you would like to attend, but lack the courage just to turn up on your own, you can ring to find out more and make arrangements.

It is good to know that Rainham's Jubilee Celebrations were a great success. It is suggested this may become an annual event, let Dean Caston at The Oasthouse Theatre (372121) know if you have strong feelings, either way, about this or are able to help with the organisation, he will be pleased to receive any feedback. We were at Guide Camp near East Grinstead during the Jubilee week so missed the local events, but were treated to firework displays (we heard even if we could not see much) on each of the four holiday nights. Luckily for most people in the south who had organised events the climate was kind to us this year. However, the weather deteriorated rapidly after the weekend and by the Wednesday evening at camp we were paddling in a sea of mud. It does rather take the shine off these events when we have to bring home lots of wet and muddy equipment. Bad weather really makes us appreciate the modern comforts we have at home and makes us wonder how we coped at camp before the days of fixed toilet blocks, constant hot water and even a limited supply of electricity on the site.

We include several appeals for help this month, if you have some time to spare a couple of charities need committee members, Hands the Volunteer Bureau can be contacted on 304204 or MASH the Asthma Charity on 855844, or if you prefer to be out in the open air Foxburrow Wood needs people to help keep it a pleasant place. Your assistance with any of these causes would be greatly appreciated. Other than

these there is a Dance Club or Floral Art Group you could join, and plenty else to read and enjoy in our pages. Do have a good month and we will see you again in August.

## Correspondence

### JUBILEE PAGEANT

Dear Editor,

We watched the Jubilee Pageant in Rainham on 2nd June. Congratulations to all the boys and girls who took part.

However, where were all the Rainham traders? We only saw one - Ladyfair Hairdressers. Are they the only ones left in the High Street?

Well done Jane, Jean and Sharon.

Sincerely  
Roy & Jacque Manington  
01634 373801

### GOLDEN JUBILEE PAGEANT

Dear Editor,

I would just like to express my thanks to all those who took part in and came out into the streets to watch the Golden Jubilee Pageant on Sunday 2nd June.

On probably the warmest day this summer the sight of an array of vehicles spanning 50 years, Gillingham Marching Band, Rainham Rangerettes and the Deputy Mayor in full regalia, together with a sea of Union Jacks was a sight to remember. It showed that Rainham can put on a spectacle with a little effort!

Unfortunately, we had to change the route a few weeks before the Pageant (requested by the Police) which was after the majority of the publicity had been circulated. However, this did not deter large groups of people from coming out onto the pavements to cheer the parade as it passed by their houses.

The church was packed for a Service of Thanksgiving for Her Majesty the Queen and the day ended with over 200 people attending a variety concert in St Margaret's Church with a rousing patriotic finale led by Mrs Marie Sumner.

We can now look forward to celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 or should we make this an annual event for Rainham?

Yours sincerely  
Dean Caston  
108 Hawbeck Road  
Parkwood

### DANCE CLUB

The Mountbatten Dance Club has been running for the past 16 years, and has recently moved from a hall in Gillingham to a larger school hall in Rainham, so is now able to welcome couples who would like a nice social evening with sequence and ballroom dancing. We meet every Thursday evening between 7.30 and 10pm.

For further details ring Tom or Irene on 01634 300464.

### CARE HAND-IN-HAND APPEAL

Dear Editor,

On Saturday August 3rd, the last day of their season, Dave and Mavis Knowler, the owners of Knowlers' Nursery, 143 Berengrave Lane, Rainham, have very kindly offered CARE their premises and facilities to hold a fund-raising day. Teas, coffees and cakes will be on sale, together with jams, pickles and other goods made by the residents of CARE. There will also be a selection of Christmas cards at extremely reasonable prices. Refreshments and goods will be available from 10am until 4pm.

CARE is an organisation for people with learning disabilities, providing encouragement, support and guidance to its residents and day service users. The present premises are in remote Ide Hill. The residents no longer wish to be so isolated. They want to experience life as we do and be able to take up opportunities for work placements, college courses and social outings without travel arrangements becoming a major disruption to daily life. In order to meet these needs, CARE's plans for a new purpose-built residential and day centre at Edenbridge are well underway. It will include workshops, a horticulture centre, coffee and craft shops, together with residential accommodation for thirty people with learning disabilities.

Based in nearby towns and linked with the main centre are three group homes, each housing eight people able to live more independently.

As well as creating this flexible approach, CARE is aiming to ensure that all its residents benefit from access to local facilities, together with the wealth of new experiences that this will provide.

Hand-in-hand we can help others lead the life we take for granted.

Yours sincerely  
Ruth Fowler  
Chairman, South East  
Appeals Committee  
'Charry Trees'  
217 Wigmore Road  
Gillingham  
01634 387621

## Abbeyfield

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### CHATHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS 1974 to 1981

Dear Editor,

I am looking for ladies of a certain age, i.e. born between September 1962 and August 1963 who attended Chatham Grammar School for Girls and who would be interested in getting back together with some of their old form mates for a reunion, pencilled in for August or late September of this year.

If there are any Old Girls out there, they can contact me at the address below.

Thanking you for your assistance in my search.

Yours faithfully  
Wendy Draper (née Reed)  
Orchard House  
Station Road  
Rainham, Kent ME8 7RS

### HARVEST TEA

Dear Editor,

Last year we held a Harvest Tea in the Millennium Centre, Rainham. This was so successful we are pleased to announce that we are going to repeat it again this year.

On Sundays 22nd and 29th September The Lions Club of Gillingham and their partners are arranging a Golden Jubilee Tea.

We would like to invite Senior Citizens of the area to join us for tea and entertainment. FREE tickets are available by post from Mrs Brenda Woodrow, 53 South Avenue, Gillingham, ME7 6EF, by telephoning Medway 362851 or Medway 387991 (Mrs M. Banks) or from The Age Concern Centre, 131-133 High Street, Rainham.

Transport can be arranged and we would particularly like to see people who live alone or do not have the opportunity to get out too often. Please encourage family, friends and neighbours to attend.

Arrival time is 3.15pm for 3.30pm and we hope many of you will take the opportunity to join us again and enjoy the afternoon at The Millennium Centre.

Yours sincerely  
Pauline Carey  
on behalf of  
The Lions Club of  
Gillingham

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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 July 2002

- July 6th – Parkwood School Summer Fair 1.00pm.  
Admission 50p. Senior Citizens 30p. Children free.  
July 6th – Friends of Wakeley Schools fundraising  
SUMMER FAYRE 10.00am to 12 noon.  
Sideshowes and activities. Admission 30p. Boot and  
Craft pitches will be available at £5 per pitch (paid  
in advance) and £6 per pitch (paid on the day).  
Contact the school Tel: 231965 (during school  
hours).  
July 6th – Medway & District Group of HF Holidays.  
Meet 10.30am Bearsted Station. Packed lunch or  
PH 'Sugar Loaves'. 6.5 miles.  
July 6th – Instep Dancing Saturday Social Dance.  
Rainham School for Girls. Ballroom/Latin  
Sequence. 8.00 to 11.00pm. Enquiries telephone  
01634 363738.  
July 6th – FUN DAY 10.00am to 4.00pm. Field in  
Solomon Road, Rainham. Maizie Bunch Trust  
Fund, Guy's Hospital. Entrance 50p, Children free.  
July 6th – Miers Court School PTFA SUMMER  
FAIR. 11.00am to 2.00pm. Fun and games for the  
whole family. All welcome.  
July 6th – Medway Mineral Fossil Fair 10.00am to  
4.00pm, Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre  
Upstairs Community Hall. Admission 50p.  
July 6th – Upchurch Open Air Theatre and Picnic in  
the Paddock Jubilee Celebrations from 3.00pm.  
Tickets £5 adults, £4 concessions, £2 child from  
231326 or 230526.  
July 7th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet  
10.30am West Peckham Church. 6 miles.  
Dogs on leads.  
July 7th – Ramblers Association. Start 10.00am.  
7 miles. Meet and park in All Saints' car park on  
A268 Hawkhurst.  
July 7th – Countryside Event. Butterflies &

- Bushcrickets Walk. 11.00am to 1.00pm, Darland  
Banks (West Bank). £1.50 book and pay in  
advance 812196.  
July 8th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club.  
2.00pm to 4.00pm, Howard Hall, Woodside,  
Wigmore.  
July 8th – Medway Spinners, Dyers & Weavers  
Association. Carole – Sample off loom weaving.  
Everything provided. 7.30 to 9.30pm at the Annexe  
(Urchins Playgroup) building in Marlborough  
Road, Gillingham.  
July 9th – Medway Antiques and Collectors Club.  
Old Pewter – Poor Man's Silver. 7.30 for 8.00pm,  
St George Hotel, 7-8 New Road Avenue, Chatham.  
Ring 365861 for details.  
July 9th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet  
7.00pm Hollingbourne Village Hall. 4 miles.  
Dogs on leads.  
July 9th – Gillingham and District Fuchsia &  
Pelargonium Society. Mini-Show of Distribution  
Plants. George Puddifoot will be in attendance,  
accompanied by the Secretary of S.A. Fuchsia  
Society, Rita & Butch Bouyens. 7.30 to 10.00pm,  
Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way.  
July 9th – Ramblers Association. Start 7.00pm.  
5 miles. Meet and park in 'See-Ho' PH car park,  
Pear Tree Lane, Shorne.  
July 9th – Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club.  
8.00 to 10.00pm, The Red Cross Gillingham  
Centre, 31 Balmoral Road, Gillingham.  
July 10th – Rainham Flower Club. Demonstration –  
Graeme Armstrong 'Song of Summer', 7.30 to  
9.30pm, Upchurch Village Hall.  
July 10th – Bredhurst WI. Mrs A.K. How, MP.  
Magistrates in the community. Competition:  
An Item in Green. 7.30pm in the Village Hall.  
July 10th – Ramblers Association. Start 10.00am.  
10 miles. Meet and park in the Chilham car park.  
July 10th – Medway Evacuees Reunion Group. 1.00  
to 4.00pm, Riverside Indoor Bowling Green, Dock  
Road, Chatham. New members welcome, details  
from 814922.  
July 11th, 12th, 13th, 18th, 19th, 20th – RaTS present  
'Albert Makes Us Laugh', Oasthouse Theatre,  
Rainham. 8.00pm. Tickets £5.00 from 360506  
(weekdays 9am to 8pm).

- July 11th – Wigmore Thursday Club. Simone  
Breugem, Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Unit.  
2.00pm, St Matthew's Community Centre,  
Drewery Drive, Wigmore. For people over the age  
of 50. For further information telephone 235507.  
July 12th – Mid-Kent Astronomical Society. Peter  
Parish and friends with constellation of the month,  
sky diary and observing. 8.00pm, Bredhurst  
Village Hall. For further details telephone 01634  
308035.  
July 12th – St Matthew's Church Roof & Renew  
Appeal Concert by Rufus Muller, an Internaitonal  
Operatic Tenor. Tickets £12 from 360633.  
July 13th – Medway & District Group of  
HF Holidays. Meet 11.00am, Faversham Station.  
Packed lunch or PH available.  
July 14th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet  
2.30pm, High Halstow RSPB Reserve. 7 miles.  
Dogs on leads.  
July 14th – Ramblers Association. Start 10.00am.  
6.5 miles. Meet and park in Egerton Community  
Hall car park.  
July 14th – St Augustine's R.C. School, Deanwood  
Drive. SUMMER FAYRE, 12 to 4.00pm.  
July 15th – Rainham Evening WI. Letter 'S'. The  
Darling Buds of May. Mrs Attaway. 7.30pm,  
Platters Lodge, Highfield Road, Rainham.  
July 15th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club  
(see 8th July).  
July 15th to 27th – The Medway Little Theatre  
present The Duncan Rand Annual One Act Play  
Festival. Box Office 01634 400322.  
July 16th – Gillingham Horticultural Society Floral  
Art Group. 'Do the Continental' – Parallel Style  
arrangements (fresh flowers). 7.30 to 9.00pm,  
United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road,  
Gillingham.  
July 16th – Rainham Minders. 9.30 to 11.30am,  
Methodist Church Hall, Station Road, Rainham.  
All Registered Child Minders welcome. Ring  
Claire 376270 for details.  
July 17th – Bredhurst Garden Club. Brian Cover Talk  
on 'Roses Grow on You'. African Violet Show.  
8.00pm in the Village Hall.  
July 17th – Wigmore Afternoon Townswomen's  
Guild. Cream Tea and Exhibition Work. 1.45 to

- 4.15pm in the Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore.  
July 18th – Gillingham Flower Arrangers. Down the  
Garden Path – An all green arrangement. 7.30pm,  
The Garrison Church Hall, Mansion Row,  
Brompton.  
July 18th – Rainham Afternoon WI. Making Paper  
flowers – Mrs J. Gregory. 1.45pm, Methodist  
Church Hall, Station Road, Rainham.  
July 18th – Wigmore Thursday Club. Mrs Phippen,  
'Reflections of Summer' (see 11th July).  
July 18th – Countryside Event. Glow Worm & Moth  
Evening. 9.30pm, Darland Banks. £1.60 per  
person. Book in advance 812196.  
July 20th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet  
10.45pm, Luddesdown Oranic Farm, 3½ miles.  
July 20th – Quiz Night at Oast House Community  
Centre. 8.00pm. Details ring 374558.  
July 20th – Garden Party held by Marilyn Soffe in aid  
of Macmillan Cancer Relief, 55 Bredhurst Road,  
Wigmore, 1.30 to 4.30pm, all welcome. £1.50  
(children 50p). Stalls, Games and Music. Details  
from 232158 or 230329.  
July 20th – Friends of St Margaret's AGM, 5.30pm in  
church, followed by a service at 6.30pm and a  
barbeque at 7.00pm. All welcome (particularly  
prospective members).  
July 21st – Ramblers Association. Start 10.00am,  
8.5 miles. Meet and park at Hasey Common on  
B2026 south of Westerham.  
July 21st – Countryside Event. Butterfly  
Conservation. 11.00am to 5.00pm, Riverside  
Country Park. Details 378987.  
July 22nd – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan  
(see 8th July).  
July 22nd – Medway Spinners, Dyers & Weavers  
Association. Pat – Ecologically Friendly Natural  
Dyeing (see 8th July).  
July 23rd – Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club  
(see 9th July).  
July 24th – Countryside Event. Beginners Botany.  
9.30am, Riverside Country Park. £3.50. Book in  
advance 378987.  
July 25th – Rainham & District Dollshouse and  
Miniaturist Group. 7.30pm, St Thomas of  
Canterbury Church Hall, London Road, Rainham.  
Telephone 312038 for details. *Continued on page 11*

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## LOCAL NATURE RESERVE STATUS FOR FOXBURROW WOOD

Along with other residents backing on to Foxburrow Wood, I have recently received a letter from the Legal Department of Medway Council, announcing that at long last Foxburrow Wood has been declared a Local Nature Reserve in recognition of the significant nature conservation interests within its boundaries.

Foxburrow Wood has records and maps going as far back as the early 17th century and has many ancient woodland indicators such as Herb Paris and Bluebells. Foxburrow is a remnant of a large ancient woodland stretching from the River Medway to Queen's Down Warren on the North Downs. It was virtually devastated in October 1987 when Hurricane Herbert hit the south east of England. The Foxburrow Wood Restoration Group was formed by myself and other local residents to replant and restore the woodland to its former glory. The collaboration between Gillingham Borough Council and the Group was thought to be the first of its kind in the country.

As many of you will know the Group assisted in planting 12,000 young trees involving local school children and 140 residents. Over the past 10 to 14 years we have had the pleasure of seeing the woodland blossom into the woodland we see today, with the return of much of the flora and fauna that were present before the devastation. Unfortunately many of the residents who formed the restoration group have moved away and the few remaining have only been able to 'keep an eye' on the woodland and record the birds, plants, mammals, butterflies and insects as they have returned to the wood.

In their letter, the Council asks us to enjoy and respect this small 'reservoir' of wildlife, ensuring all garden waste is either composted or taken to the tip and all dog mess is removed from the site.

On Tuesday 11th June Peter Crawford (Medway Countryside Development Officer), Simon Bellinger (Ranger) and a small group of local residents walked around Foxburrow Wood noting the special fauna and flora within the wood and also formulating a management plan for the wood. It is the intention that a Woodland Management Committee will be introduced later in the year to include all the

woodland sites within the Borough. Anyone interested in playing their part in the future of Foxburrow Wood will be invited to join this committee. Please telephone Simon or Peter if you are interested in joining this committee. (Telephone no. 01634 812196).

Can I say what a particular pleasure it is to walk around the woodland, knowing that 14 years ago a small group of local residents and school children planted the trees and helped with the restoration of the woodland. I would ask any of you who have some spare time to telephone the Council and indicate your interest in the health of Foxburrow Wood and the flora and fauna within it.

Carole Nixon  
Foxburrow Wood Restoration Group

## FIRST WORLD WAR SOLDIERS

For the past six months I have been researching the First World War dead associated with Rainham and the surrounding parishes. The purpose of my research is to eventually publish a local history book commemorating the fallen and this has since been adjusted to two potential publications, the first to cover the 99 names on the Rainham War Memorial and the second to cover a similar number of fatalities since identified but who were not included on the memorial. I would be grateful to hear from any readers that have information on these men or what happened to their families. Similarly, I have approaching 50,000 words in note form and would be happy to disclose individual details to any descendants, although I should point out information ranges from very minor to quite detailed biographies. Please contact Jonathan Saunders - 01634 379248 or 020 7522 4156.

## THE FRIENDS OF ST MARGARET'S CHURCH

This year's AGM will be held on St Margaret's Day (20th July), starting with the meeting at 5.30pm in the church, then followed by a service at 6.30pm and a barbecue at approximately 7pm. (Prospective members welcomed.)

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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR JUNE

Many readers will have watched the natural history programme, 'Bill Oddie goes Wild', on BBC2. One place that Bill visited was the village of Urchfont in Wiltshire on the end of Salisbury Plain. It is an attractive and prosperous-looking village surrounded by arable and pastoral land. The programme showed a wide variety of the wildlife of Urchfont and its surroundings but it was three species of birds which caught my own particular interest. They were house martins nesting under the eaves of a rather grand house, a spotted flycatcher at her nest in a hole in a brick wall and swallows nesting in a tractor shed.

Rainham's neighbouring village of Hartlip could also be described as attractive and prosperous-looking. It is surrounded by orchards, fields of Christmas trees, arable fields and grassland. I took a cycle ride there in early June to have a look at its wildlife and, in particular, to keep an eye open for any house martins, spotted flycatchers or swallows.

At the top of South Bush Lane I came across a group of swallows skimming above the broad beans of Woodside Farm. It was a good start to my hunt. On the edge of Hartlip I spotted a couple of red legged partridges in a field of young maize plants opposite Hartlip Place. The red legged partridge is heavier than the native grey and is boldly patterned on the face.

I paused at the village pond opposite the Methodist church. It is tiny compared with the pond at Urchfont and too small to support any wildfowl. But it provides drinking and bathing facilities for local greenfinches, blackbirds, chaffinches and dunlocks. The flowers of yellow flag were in bloom on the edge of the pond which is overshadowed by an impressive lime tree.

Hartlip is ideal for spotted flycatchers having many old walls and outhouses which can serve as nesting sites and many large gardens and lawns which harbour insects. Even so, I was not banking on seeing a spotted flycatcher. But I did. It was flitting between the gardens of Yew Tree Cottage and neighbouring Craiglea which are just above the entrance to Hartlip Village Hall. The spotted flycatcher is a delightful

Summer visitor with soft, grey-brown plumage above and whitish under parts. It sits in a characteristic upright position on a vantage point before darting after passing insects.

At the end of The Street I turned right into Munns Lane and then right again into Lower Hartlip Road. Under the eaves of the front and side of Paradise Cottage were many house martins nests. There were no martins about but the householder, who was in his garden, assured me that they were back in Hartlip. So I treated the score as two species down and one to go.

I passed the Rose and Crown pub and paused at the gate to a large field belonging to Sweepstake Farm. It was dotted with ash, sycamore, horse chestnut and other large trees. Three horses grazed the grass growing between the buttercups. Also feeding there were another pair of red legged partridges, a pheasant, a mistle thrush, a flock of wood pigeons and a number of rabbits. But no swallows.

I cycled up Mount Lane and completed my circular tour of Hartlip. The score was apparently stuck on two out of three. On my way home, at the top of Spade Lane, I came across a skylark singing above a field of wheat interspersed with wild chamomile or scented mayweed which is a member of the daisy family. A number of swallows, perhaps the same ones that I had met earlier, were hawking for insects above the white flowers of the mayweed. Since they were in the parish of Hartlip I decided to include them in my count. Three out of three plus a skylark. Hartlip could be treated as being on a par with Urchfont.

Joe Ennis

## WATTS THE CHEMIST

Among the archives of Watts the Rainham Chemist, whose name can still be read above the boarded-up shop in Rainham High Street, are several books dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Two contain the notes made by different members of the family as they studied for their pharmacy qualifications. These books both begin with lectures on botany and elementary chemistry, the first page in one case being headed 'Special Short Notes on Pharmacy. Minor Lecture No. 1'. The lectures, ending with No. 59, are recorded in a soft-back school notebook, but the student's attention was not

always wholly engaged. Beneath the page entitled 'Lecture 7', on practical dispensing, is written 'A lecture far too long, of facts (too) well-known to write'. And inside the back cover the owner has practised the signature 'R. Watts' many times. A second, hardback, notebook which is un-named has similar notes on the same course of lectures, dated 1885, and also includes 'Practical Notes on Photography'.

Robert Watts was the nephew of Henry Watts, a widower, who had been in business as Chemist and Druggist in Chatham High Street from the mid-nineteenth century. In 1881 Henry had two apprentices, Robert, aged 17, and Frank Dixon, who was 16. Robert stayed with his uncle at the shop near the bottom of Hamond Hill for at least ten years, but by 1899 he had taken over the premises of George Andrew, Chemist and Druggist. They were at No. 126 High Street, Rainham, next to the 'Waterman's Arms', and opposite Ivy Street. For many years a gas lamp standard, with 'Watts Chemist' painted on the glass enclosing the light, stood outside. During the early part of the twentieth century Watts also acted as an insurance agent. The heading of a partly-used duplicate book makes it clear that he was now fully qualified: 'Robert Watts, Dispensing Chemist (by examination)'.

Of more general interest are two volumes in which have been collected recipes for the wide variety of products sold by a Victorian chemist - not just medicines, but ink, fly glue, hair pomades and tonics, ginger beer and lemonade, label varnish, curry powder, Nubian blacking and lavender water. Many of these have been cut from papers and stuck in, others are hand-written. Some have been crossed through, perhaps because a more effective 'chilblain specific' or 'remedy for warts' has emerged. Medicines for sick dogs, sheep, cows and horses play a significant part.

The earliest note dates from 1842, but other hands have continued the collection beyond 1880. This 'Cure for the Ague' is never known to fail if taken regularly:

Powder bark  
Ground black pepper  
Salt tartar

Snake root powder

Poppy syrup

Treacle sufficient to form an electuary.

This was to be taken every four hours 'when the fit is off'. The compiler remarks that for 'weakly women and children' the snake root should be omitted.

Also preserved is a counter prescription book, which opens in August 1900, from the Rainham shop. At the front is an index of account customers, with details of the medicines which were frequently required by them. Then begins the record of what was dispensed each day, occasionally with marginal notes - 'heart shaky'; 'tuberculous glands'; 'slight sunstroke'. By 1912 prices are sometimes added: 1/- was standard. After this date the book has been used only intermittently; in 1919, in 1922 for a while, then in 1936. About ten prescriptions were dispensed daily, each transaction carefully numbered.

After the 1950s fewer and fewer medicines were mixed on the premises, and the prescriptions read 'tabs' of branded products, such as 'Dequadin loz(enges)'. From 1960 the inclusion of the name of the doctor becomes more frequent, and when the record ends in the early seventies, by which time perhaps 50% of all prescriptions are for 'the pill', it is always noted.

According to a street directory of 1954/5 there were by then two other Chemists in Rainham, Fenwick's at 31 London Road and Hickmott's at 85 London Road, while Watts remained at the original site. The section of the A2 known as London Road at that time extended as far as 'The Cricketers'. Watts the Chemist finally closed about twenty years ago, as the trading centre of Rainham moved west and other pharmacies, closer to doctors' surgeries, flourished. RAD

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## Diary 2002 continued

July 25th – Wigmore Thursday Club. Service, Sales Stall. Quiz (see 11th July).

July 25th – Countryside Event. Evening Talk – Bats, 8.30pm, Capstone Farm Country Park. £1.60. Book in advance 812196.

July 26th – Mid-Kent Astronomical Society. Simon Jenner on Basic Observing Techniques (see 12th July).

July 27th – Gillingham and District Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society ANNUAL SHOW in the Main Hall, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, Rainham. Contact no. 853864.

July 27th – Barnardo's Jubilee Garden Party, 32 Roberts Road. 2.00 to 4.00pm. Tickets £2.00 including refreshments, from 233405.

July 28th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 2.30pm, Detling Village. 4½ miles. Dogs on leads.

July 28th – Ramblers Association. Start 10.00am. 9 miles. Meet and park at Haver Rail Station.

July 29th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club (see 8th July).

July 30th – Gillingham Horticultural Society Floral Art Group. Evening out at a garden somewhere.

August 1st – Gillingham Flower Arrangers. Evening on Miniatures (see 18th July).

August 1st – Countryside Event. Evening Bird Cruise. £13. Book and pay in advance 378987.

August 3rd – Instep Dancing (see 6th July).

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July 29th, August 5th, 12th & 19th, Riverside Park Children's Nature Days, 10.30am to 12 noon or 1.30 to 3.00pm.

August 2nd, 7th, 23rd & 28th, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10am to 12 noon or 2pm to 4pm.

July 31st August 14th & 21st, Fishing Teach-In, Capstone Country Park.

August 9th – Wildlife Detectives. Book in advance 378987.

## THE RAINHAM & WIGMORE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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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  
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Committee appointments and additional Trustees are  
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Any reader interested in contributing to the future  
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