

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

APRIL 2003
NUMBER 377

Bredhurst Road, Wigmore



An early view of Bredhurst Road, Wigmore. Can anyone pinpoint the exact position and tell us in which direction the camera is pointing or possibly identify the three people?

Robert J. Kitney

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Next Issue: May 3rd 2003
Copy Date: Ap 15th Sm Ads Ap 18th

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

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

Editorial

Last year we quite correctly celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Queen's accession to the throne although rather bizarrely the date chosen for the rejoicing was actually the 49th anniversary of her Coronation. However, I am very pleased to see from our Diary that St Margaret's Church are organising some celebrations for this year to remember the Coronation of June 2nd 1953. A Flower Festival entitled 'A Celebration of Community Life' will be held in the church from May 30th to June 2nd, with a concert performed by the RATS on May 31st and a Family Service on June 1st. More details next month and if anyone else is planning celebratory events do let us know.

Your help is needed this month in at least two ways. Does anyone know what became of the family of Harold Greenhalgh, one time Headmaster of the Council School, or can identify A.J. Goodwin? Jonathan Saunders, who is researching the names on Rainham's War Memorial, would be very interested if you can shed any light on these two names in particular; he can be contacted on 379248. The other request comes from the Mierscourt Guide Company, who would love some extra assistance in the shape of Guiders to help run this enthusiastic unit. If you have fond memories of your time as a Guide and would like to find out more of what is involved please ring the District Commissioner, Lesley Dennis, on 234738 for more details.

We have just returned from our, now, annual holiday 'down under'. This year we visited Tasmania, and yes we did see some Tasmanian Devils, not, unfortunately, in the wild but together with koalas and wombats in an animal sanctuary. However, we were much more successful this year at spotting wild animals, actually in the wild. They would not all stand still and be photographed and it was usually dusk at the time so if I did manage to click the camera the picture will probably not result in anything other than a blurred shape to jog the memory but we really did see echidna, wallaby, kangaroo, possum, shearwater (or mutton birds as the Tasmanians call them) and our proudest boast, duck billed platypus, followed almost immediately by kookaburras who really were laughing at us. Altogether a very satisfactory achievement. Unfortunately, we returned

to some sadder news, my aunt, Miss F.A. (Anne) Cheeseman, MBE, died, aged 92, in the middle of March. Many Rainham people of my generation will remember her as the superintendent of St Margaret's Sunday School where she encouraged us to collect ship halfpennies and in other fund raising activities to support the British & Foreign Bible Society. Our group had a particular interest in supplying Bibles to Kenya and we were called 'The Good News Ship Swahili'. For many years St Margaret's won the annual national competition as top fund raisers and we proudly brought home the flag ship from the meeting in London to display in the window of the children's corner in church. After moving to Newington and then retiring Miss Cheeseman left Rainham Sunday School but until quite recently continued to teach children at Newington.

It is wonderful to come home and find all the spring flowers making such a magnificent show. Spring certainly seems to be well on the way so do have a good month, enjoy the good weather and we will see you again in May.

Correspondence

RAINHAM WAR MEMORIAL

Dear Editor,

Further to my earlier request regarding Rainham's War Memorial, I am grateful to all your readers who contacted me. If there are others who could shed light on any of Rainham's First World War servicemen or women then I would be very interested to hear from them. From the War Memorial itself I am particularly interested in positively identifying A.J. Goodwin. Also, does any reader know what became of the family of Harold Greenhalgh - Headmaster of the Council Schools?

As you will recall it is my intention to publish an account on the War Memorial and as I am now regularly asked 'when', can I add that avenues of research are nearly exhausted and I hope to finish this project very soon.

Yours faithfully,
Jonathan Saunders
01634 379248

ST MARGARET'S RAINHAM (17th GILLINGHAM) SCOUTS

Dear Editor,

We are looking for an off-road parking spot in the Rainham area for our standard-sized blue Transit van when not in use. If any reader has an unused driveway or suitable van-sized area that might be available please contact me on 01634 230430.

We are also looking for a second area where we can park our slightly larger red Transit minibus. Although a little less urgent, a parking space off the highway would be most welcome.

Yours faithfully,
Morton Jarvis
Group Scout Leader

CARE HAND-IN-HAND APPEAL

Dear Editor,

The owners of Knowlers' Nursery, 143 Berengrave Lane, Rainham, have kindly offered the use of their premises again this year for CARE to run a refreshment bar each weekend during May, including Bank Holiday Mondays. Tea, coffee, cakes, etc. will be on sale, together with a stall selling toys, books, bric-a-brac etc.

Any donations to the cake or goods stall will be gratefully accepted. All proceeds are in aid of the purpose-built premises being erected in Edenbridge. CARE provides accommodation, employment etc. to adults with learning difficulties, enabling them to lead the life you take for granted.

Yours sincerely,
Ruth Fowler
Chairman,
South East Central
Fundraising Group
01634 387621

EAST HOATH WOOD

Dear Editor,

In his article on East Hoath Wood, Mr Cooper expressed surprise that the triangular piece of land between Hoath Lane and Hempstead Hill was called 'The Scrubs'.

I think this name is confirmed by the fact that Hempstead Hill used to be called 'Scrubs Bottom'. I believe that the name was changed when the Link Road was constructed.

The remains of the Alexandra Hospital must have been demolished in the 60s, as the Link Road goes straight through the middle of the site.

Yours sincerely
C.E. Welfare
184 Ploughman's Way
Rainham

FLOWER FESTIVAL

Dear Editor,

The Friends of St Margaret's are holding a Flower Festival in church from Friday 30th May to Monday 2nd June 2003 from 10.00am to 4.00pm (except Sunday morning) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Queen's coronation. The title of the festival will be 'A Celebration of Community Life' and we are inviting all Rainham organisations to see if they

would like to take part either by sponsoring a display or donating an arrangement of their own.

On Saturday 31st May there will be a concert by the RATS Concert Party in church at 8.00pm. Admission, on the door, will be £5.00 per person and light refreshments will be served after the performance. On Sunday 1st June, a Family Service will be held in church at 10.30am at which all will be most welcome. For any enquiries please contact Ann Gray (372680) or Bev Walsh (373997).

In response to popular demand, Joe Ennis is to give another talk on old Rainham in September but he is keen to have more material, slides and photographs to enhance his present collection. If you have any of these and would be prepared to lend them to Joe please contact him on 235182.

Yours faithfully,
Kay Jarvis
Friends Committee

GHS SPRING SHOW

Dear Editor,

It's time to enjoy Spring flowers in all their beauty and you can see flowers of a high standard at the Gillingham Horticultural Spring Show on Saturday April 5th (2.30-4.30pm) at United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. There will be a large range of Spring exhibits, Domestic classes, and Floral Art and Craft, all done by the society members. Visitors are very welcome, admission is free, and tea and refreshments are available; there is a sales table and a raffle.

The society is always glad to see new faces, and would welcome new members, so come along and see what our society can do - you may like to join us.

Wynne Prescott
Vice-Chair
Floral Art Group

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Diary 2003

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

No charge is made for Diary entries
Diary Copy Date: 15th April 2003

- April 5th – Instep Dancing, Saturday Social Dance, Rainham School for Girls, Ballroom Latin/Sequence, 8.00 to 11.00pm. Details 363738.
- April 5th – Friends of St Margaret's Church, Table Sale, 10.00am to 12 noon, Millennium Centre, admission 25p. Refreshments available, ring Ann Gray 372680 for details.
- April 5th – Gillingham Horticultural Society Spring Show, 2.30 to 4.30pm, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham.
- April 5th – Wine & Wisdom Evening, St Matthew's Community Centre, 7.30pm, £5 per person supper inc. (BYOD). Ring 387055 to book.
- April 7th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club. (see 14th April)
- April 8th – Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club, 8.00 to 10.00pm, Red Cross, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. Ring 862673 for details.
- April 8th – Gillingham & District Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society, talk by John Paulding. 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, ring 362683 for details.
- April 8th – Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, 8.00pm, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham. Mr Eddie Cook 'History of Tea & Coffee', ring 365861 for details.
- April 9th – Bredhurst Women's Institute. 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall. Janet Baker 'Ma Bakers Laundry'. Ring 232617 for details.
- April 9th – Rainham Flower Club, 7.30 to 9.30pm, Upchurch Village Hall. Workshop, Ring 362123 for details.
- April 10th – Wigmore Thursday Club. 2.00pm, St Matthews Community Centre. Bingo. All over 50s welcome. Ring 235507 for details.

- April 12th – Wine & Wisdom in aid of Molly Wisdom Hospice, Forresters Hall, Sturdee Avenue, 7.30pm. Tickets £5 which includes sausage & chips from 370492.
- April 12th – Quiz Night for Cancer Research UK at Newton Village Hall. 7.30pm. £5 per ticket (inc. supper). Up to tables of 8, BYOD. Ring Alison on Med 234490 for details.
- April 13th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. 2.30pm, Wye Downs, dogs on leads, 5 miles.
- April 14th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club, Howard Hall, Woodside. 2.00 to 4.00pm. Easter Bonnet Parade, all over 50s welcome. Ring 362662 for details.
- April 14th – Rainham Evening Women's Institute. Ms H. Archdeacon 'Premature Babies', 7.30pm, Platters Farm Lodge, Highfield Road, Rainham. Ring 231554 for details.
- April 15th – Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. 7.30 to 9.00pm, 'Eggstravaganza', an Easter Arrangement, all welcome, Ring 234734 for details.
- April 16th – Medway Camcorder Club, Medway Motor Yacht Club, Borstal, 7.30pm, 'Your Special Films'. Ring 371570 for details.
- April 16th – Bredhurst Garden Club, 8.00pm, Bredhurst Village Hall. Mrs Julia Page 'Dreamy Drowsy Loose'. Ring 233554 for details.
- April 17th – Wigmore Thursday Club. 'Travels to the Holy Land' by Gerry Harris. (see 10th April)
- April 17th – Rainham (Afternoon) Women's Institute, 1.45pm, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham. Japan – Miss M. Symons. Ring 372479 for details.
- April 19th – Instep Dancing. (see 5th April)
- April 20th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, 10.30am. Goudhurst car park, dogs on leads. 7 miles.
- April 22nd – Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club. (see 8th April)
- April 23rd – Three Towns Theatre Group 'The King & I', 7.30pm (Sat matinée 2.30pm). Box Office 338338.
- April 24th – Rainham & District Dollhouse Group, 7.30pm, St Thomas of Canterbury Church Hall. Details from 312038.


- April 24th – Wigmore Thursday Club. Service, Sales Stall & Quiz. (see 10th April)
- April 25th – Medway Geographical Society 'Walk in the Pyrenees', Mr Brian Self. 7.30 to 9.00pm. Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham.
- April 26th – New Exhibition Rainham Bookshop Gallery.
- April 27th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, 2.00pm. Vernon Holme School, Harbledown, no dogs, 6 miles.
- April 28th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club. (see 14th April)
- April 29th – Wigmore Men's Fellowship, Marlborough Unit, 8.00pm, Chairman's Choice, all welcome. Details 364818.
- April 29th – Wigmore Community & Residents Association, 7.30pm, Fairview Junior School Hall, all welcome. Details from 378769.
- April 30th – Medway Camcorder Club. Talk 'Social Outings and Day Trips'. (see 16th April)
- May 1st – Wigmore Thursday Club. Celia Boyce 'Chelsea Flower Show 2002'. (see 10th April)
- May 2nd – Gillingham Recorded Music Society, 'More Musical Landscapes' Harold and Dorothy Rogers, 7.15 to 9.15pm. St Augustine's Church Room (top of Rock Avenue), Gillingham.
- May 3rd – Instep Dancing. (see 5th April)
- May 3rd-5th – Stall & Refreshments at Knowlers Nursery, 143 Berengrave Lane, 10.00am to 4.00pm, in aid of CARE Hand in Hand Appeal.
- May 4th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, 10.00am, Tenterden Rail Station, dogs on leads, 6 miles.
- May 6th – Floral Art Group, Blossom Time, a petite arrangement. (see 15th April)
- May 7th – Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm, Berengrave Cricket Club House, Berengrave Lane, Mr G. Johnson 'Kent an Unusual View'. Ring 387176 for details.
- May 8th – Wigmore Thursday Club, Countdown. (see 10th April)
- May 8th-17th – Medway Little Theatre present 'Chicken Soup with Barley' by Arnold Wesker, 7.30pm. Box Office 400322.
- May 10th – City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Central Theatre, Chatham, 7.30pm. Overture Verdi Nabucco, Four Last Songs, Richard Strauss.

- Box Office 403868.
- May 10th-11th – CARE Stall at Knowlers Nursery (see 3rd May)
- May 11th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, 2.00pm, Wye Church. No dogs, 6 miles.
- May 11th – Wigmore Men's Fellowship & St Matthew's Church Roof and Renew Appeal. Race Night at St Matthew's Community Centre, 7.00pm. Tickets £6 from 235056 or 370722 include supper, BYOD.
- May 12th – Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club. (see 14th April)
- May 13th – Gillingham & District Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society, talk Dick Hampshire, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls. Ring 362683 for details.
- May 13th – Wigmore Men's Fellowship, Robot Wars. (see 29th April)
- May 13th – Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, 8.00pm, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham. Mr A. Moore 'Silversmithing from Idea to Item'. Ring 365861 for details.
- May 14th – Medway Camcorder Club, visit by Tonbridge Club. (see 16th April)
- May 14th – Bredhurst Women's Institute, 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Resolutions. Ring 232617
- Scottish Country Dancing. Medway Caledonians meet each Monday 1.30 to 3.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall and each Thursday 8.00 to 10.30pm All Saints' Church Hall, Frindsbury. Details from Maureen Pope 230433.
- Wigmore WRVS Darby & Joan Club meets at the Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore, from 2.00 to 4.00pm. We mostly play bingo, have a raffle and there is a break for a cup of tea and biscuits. People over the age of 50 are welcome and transport can sometimes be arranged. Ring 362662 for details.
- Craft Club meet every second Tuesday each month at Rainham Christian Fellowship. Twydale. New faces welcome. Details from 260463.
- Upbury Manor Barn Dance Club meet every Thursday at Woodlands Road, Gillingham. 7.30 to 9.30pm. Beginners welcome, singles or couples. Ring 362446 for information.


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UPCHURCH FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

8th - 13th July 2003

Make a note in your diaries to make sure you don't miss this popular biennial event. Five concerts in St Mary's Church and a traditional, foot-tapping, jazz gig in the village hall. Details will appear in a later edition of the Forum, but the following will give you a taster of what is to come.

Tuesday 8th Rainham Ladies' Choir

Wednesday 9th Opus 32

(a group of lively 16-23 year olds)

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Thursday 10th (Maggie Bloor & Ben Odom)

Friday 11th Burt Butler's Jazz Pilgrims
(in the Village Hall)

Saturday 12th Canterbury City Brass Band

Sunday 13th Upchurch Night (Upchurch Choral
Society, Church Choir, Holywell
School and local artistes)

Further information from:

Frank Osborne, 01634 233576 or

Pat New, 01634 374220.

SSAFA FORCES HELP KENT BRANCH WILL PROVIDE SUPPORT TO FAMILIES OF TROOPS DEPLOYED IN THE GULF

SSAFA Forces Help Kent Branch, a charity which helps serving and ex-Service men, women and their families, will provide support to families left behind during the present crisis in the Gulf. It will also look after dependants of TA soldiers and other reservists recently called up for service.

Nearly all the troops normally stationed in Kent have been deployed to the Gulf for OP TELIC. Many families will have been left behind to cope without spouses, fathers or mothers. Most will do so well but some may need an occasional helping hand or support and companionship.

The armed forces and the Ministry of Defence have spared no effort to put in place staff and systems to give all the help they can. Information on these measures can be obtained from the following web sites:

- [www.army.mod.uk/sol.dierwelfare/support/agencies/awf/afabsheets/OP TELIC/index/htm](http://www.army.mod.uk/sol.dierwelfare/support/agencies/awf/afabsheets/OP%20TELIC/index/htm)
- OP TELIC Families and Friends Information Pages
- www.royal-navy.mod.uk/static/pages/159.html
- Gulf Operations
- www.rafc.com.co.uk Royal Air Force Community Support

The Armed Services organisations will be assisted by volunteer bodies and charities of which SSAFA Forces Help is the front line organisation with some 400 professionals and 7,500 volunteers nationally, many of them case workers and visitors.

In Kent there are more than 150 volunteers, 90 of whom are active caseworkers. They are currently:

- in contact with the base units of the troops overseas
- testing their lines of communication with the social services and local hospitals
- liaising with the emergency services
- identifying temporary accommodation near hospitals for families to visit any casualties

Contact telephone number for Medway is 01634 233989.

THE ORIGIN OF A NAME - CARVORAN (2)

With reference to our original article on the name Carvoran, published in the December edition, readers might like to know the results of some feedback.

Several telephone conversations served to confirm that the small estate consisting of Drewery Drive, Edwards Close, St Margaret's Drive, Lakewood Drive and Carvoran Way, were named after members of his family and a local councillor of the time. Although Carvoran is thought to derive from either the fact that Edward Drewery had a caravan on the site or it was his son's name!

Do any readers have any other theories?

Pam and Philip Cole, 01634 376608.

WINE & WISDOM

We are holding a Wine and Wisdom on Saturday 12th April at 7.30pm in aid of the Molly Wisdom Hospice. Tickets are £5 which includes sausage and chips. It will be held at the Forrester's Hall in Sturdee Avenue, Gillingham. To book a table please phone Alan and Tina on 370492.

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR MARCH

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils. (William Wordsworth)

Like most National Trust properties, Rudyard Kipling's former home in Sussex, Bateman's, opens from the end of March. But at weekends in March the grounds were open for the benefit of those who wanted to see the earliest of the Spring flowers.

Bateman's lies in the Sussex High Weald which consists of numerous steep valleys and small hills. The hills are generally covered in woodland made up of coppiced hornbeam and sweet chestnut interplanted with standard oaks. Between the woods are a patchwork of small fields.

The house, which overlooks the River Dudwell, a tributary of the River Rother, is approached through the village of Burwash. It nestles among fields bounded by tidy hawthorn hedges and massive oak trees. Sheep in the fields complete a typical Sussex scene.

There are three formal gardens at Bateman's, two of which are walled and the largest of which is surrounded by yew hedges. It still being Winter at the time of our visit, most of the plants were dormant but there were clumps of crocuses, daffodils, snowdrops, cillas and hellebores. A quince tree trained against a wall was in bloom. Many of the fruit and other trees in the formal gardens were festooned with lichens which are more noticeable when the trees are bare of leaves. A robin sang from the top of a garden wall and the two blue tits kept in touch with each other as they searched for insects in an overhanging oak tree.

In the wild flower garden beside the River Dudwell were groups of celandines, primroses, snowdrops and daffodils. It is not clear whether Kipling or any of his predecessors had had a hand in introducing any of these species to the wild garden. Sufficient to say that snowdrops were probably brought into Britain from central Europe in medieval times and planted in the grounds of churches and monasteries. They would have been introduced for religious reasons, the pure

white blooms of the flower having long been used by the Roman Catholic church in the celebration of Candlemas on 2nd February. It is, however, possible that some colonies of snowdrops in this country are of native origin, particularly those in south west England and along the Welsh border. There is always a good display of snowdrops in Leeds churchyard near Maidstone.

According to Richard Mabey, writing in his book 'Flora Britannica', the wild daffodil continued to be one of the most widespread and common Spring flowers in this country until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then, across much of central and eastern England in particular, it seemed to dip into a rapid and mysterious decline. By the 1930s thousands of Londoners were prepared to make a round trip of over 200 miles to Ledbury and the surrounding area, by means of special trains run by the Great Western Railway, to see and pick wild daffodils. The flowers were also picked by local people and dispatched to various parts of the country, especially just prior to Mothering Sunday. Wild daffodils remained one of the seasonal crops of gypsies, particularly in the West Country, up to the mid 1980s.

Today the wild daffodil, once widespread and common, occurs only in certain widely separated parts of the country, such as Devon, the Black Mountains of Wales, the Lake District and the Sussex Weald. Here in Kent there is a colony at Lesnes Abbey, near Erith.

After a visit to the water mill on the River Dudwell, which once again grinds wheat into flour, we headed for the Mulberry Tea Room for our first National Trust tea of the season. On the counter were the labels 'Date and Walnut', 'Fruit Cake', 'Chocolate Sponge', 'Sussex Black' and 'Flapjack'. For me, they are as much a sign of the end of Winter as snowdrops and daffodils.

Joe Ennis

LAST PRIZE FIGHT TOOK PLACE HERE

In the years which immediately preceded the last war, I was local correspondent for the 'Kent Messenger' here in Rainham and in those days local news was considered more important than now, although in retrospect I believe that I was poorly paid at a penny

per line (old money). The papers worked on the principle that if a person's name was mentioned they had a reader, and if they printed a photograph that readership would last a lifetime. I could regularly rely on the reports of soccer and cricket matches, whist drives, deaths and marriages to fill a fairly long column, including a list of presents if either party of the marriage was well known. I did not like calling upon very close relatives of deceased residents, which is how I developed a knowledge of many local relationships as most of the older Rainham families were then, and still are, inter-related.

Although Rainham was one of the largest villages in Kent, its population was closely knit and interdependent and popular personalities tended to flourish far more than now – one such resident was Mr Henry George Samson known as 'the grand old man of Rainham' who eventually died in 1948 aged 95. He looked the part, being of stocky build with a short white beard and lived in a thatched cottage next to the congregational chapel in Meres Court Road (1924 map) although we still called it Chapel Lane. Incidentally I have a copy of the report of his death and the printed photograph at the time if any of his relatives would be interested. He was always good for a story, particularly when I took him an ounce of tobacco and now, in my old age, I understand what he meant when he said 'to be able to enjoy your former life, in memory, is to live it twice over'.

At that time Mr Samson was one of the very few persons left who participated in the last bare-knuckle prize fight to be held in England when it was already illegal. Apparently, Mr John and Mr Fred Scott arranged a £400 a side contest between Jimmy Roberts and Alec Hayes to take place at Farthing Corner at 4.00am on a morning in May 1885. Mr Samson was used to providing all the furniture for the various fetes and sporting events which took place in Rainham at that time, and he was entrusted with the task of providing and making the stalls, tables and benches for the expected spectators who came mainly from London to Chatham on the midnight train. They then completed the journey on horse drawn vehicles, which had been secretly arranged for the occasion. These visitors told those who were inquisitive that they were attending a ball, which must have raised

some eyebrows.

The fight lasted nearly two hours ending at ten minutes to six when Hayes, the better fighter, unfortunately damaged his fist on a ring post when he missed Roberts. A collection for the loser raised £100 and Mr Samson took him home and cared for him on the following day.

The village constable had become suspicious with the amount of unusual traffic movements and arrived at the scene just before the event was to commence, whereupon he was well entertained to a late supper or an early breakfast with limitless supplies of drink until after the fight. Some of those who attended were later charged at the Court of Sessions, which presumably would have been held at Sittingbourne, where all were found 'not guilty'. This was hardly surprising as it was said that the Chairman had also attended the event.

I wonder how many of those who live nearby realise that they may be walking over the very spot where this historic sporting event was held, and perhaps those who regularly travel to and from London via the service area may reflect upon those who travelled overnight by mail train and horse drawn vehicles to see the last prize fight to be held in England.

In the newspaper reports at the time, the location is mentioned as Fardon's Corner and I wonder if this was a mistake because I haven't seen the name on any plan or map. I should be glad to learn if any reader has information on this point.

Freddie Cooper
November 2002

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Correspondence

FRIENDS OF WAKELEY SCHOOL

Dear Editor,

The Friends of Wakeley School are organising a fundraising MUSIC QUIZ NIGHT which will be held at the school of Saturday 5th April at 7.00 for 7.30pm start.

Tables of up to 8 people can be reserved by telephoning the school (in school hours) on 231965. Tickets cost £3.50 per person (adults only) and guests should bring their own nibbles/drinks.

These evenings are great fun and you don't have to be 'musical' to enjoy the event. There will also be raffles with prizes and cash to be won.

This is Wakeley Junior School's Golden Jubilee year and the proceeds from this event will be used so that all the children can celebrate the school's 50 years of achievement. It is also tinged with sadness that this will also be Wakeley's final year as we will be merging with Meredale Infant School and re-opening in September 2003 as Riverside Primary School. Fundraising events will most certainly continue with the new school but this will be the last 'Wakeley' Music Quiz Night.

Yours sincerely
 Vanessa Reid (Mrs)
 Secretary,
 Friends of Wakeley

ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH & COMMUNITY
 CENTRE ROOF & RENEW APPEAL
 Dear Editor,

We at St Matthew's Church, Wigmore, were absolutely delighted to receive the cheque for £480 from Action Forum towards our Roof & Renew Appeal. Action Forum has given our appeal much support by coverage in the magazine as well as financial donations since we formally launched the appeal two years ago.

Last year we completed Phase 1 of the appeal when the work on the Community Centre was carried out. We have now turned our attention to the church building itself and launched Phase 2 of the appeal at the beginning of February. In fact, the cheque from Action Forum was the first to arrive after the launch.

Currently we have raised over £450,000, but still need to raise a further £317,000. For further information on the appeal or a brochure please contact me.

Many thanks for the continuing support of Action Forum.

Yours sincerely
 Peter Hagger
 Secretary of the Appeal
 Tel: 01634 235056

GAS SHOW ROOMS

Dear Editor,

I just want to thank you for your cover picture on the March Action Forum. When I look at the 'modern' building I could weep, and I am glad that my parents can't see it.

My father was appointed to 'run' the showrooms along with responsibility for all gas work in Rainham, in the '30s. Consequently we, as a family, lived in the house and very grand it was. When he retired in the early 50s we had to come down to earth and find another dwelling place. We little thought that 2 High Street would become such a monstrosity. I am so pleased that you have drawn attention to it. Perhaps somebody will try to 're-form' it.

Yours sincerely,
 Margaret List

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LEFT ANYTHING BEHIND?

Many people have been remembering the life of Mrs Eleanor Coats, who died in November 2002 shortly after her 94th birthday.

What will we leave behind? A nurse and midwife like Nell brought many healthy babies into the world. Her own three sons were not the only youngsters to become sturdy and well.

She and her husband Ron, who was a pharmacist in Rainham for over 50 years, provided comfort and longer life to countless Rainham folk.

Do you take home herbs from the supermarket or garden centre? Ron and Nell used to share their love of plants and gardening. One memorable day they came to the Chelsea Physic Garden where they recognised the plants used as herbal remedies and spoke of the modern drugs based on them.

Do you go to bazaars and look for home made preserves? What about marmalade, those pickles and the perfect little pots of mint jelly! Do you go to the RaTS theatre? There always used to be a Red Cross member to look after everyone. Did you need to borrow a stick, crutch or some other personal help from the Red Cross or go to classes there for First Aid? Mrs Coats was one of the founders of the Red Cross in Rainham and she was commandant for many years.

Do you enjoy meeting for a chat, to sing, to pray, to organise a good deed or to put on a play? Mrs Coats was active in Townswomen's Guild and other groups. Are you pleased to see the local churches working together? Mrs Coats was active in the Women's World Day of Prayer which led the way in their co-operation.

Do you have your own transport? What about Mrs Coats on her moped? Do you hate waste? At the back of the cleaners' cupboard at St Margaret's there is still one of the many mops Nell and Ron made from wire coat hangers bent to take tiny scraps of wool in a fringe for dusting.

Do you have any personal memories of Mr and Mrs Coats? Is there anyone else you remember just for being a great person? Such good things have been left behind for us to enjoy and use. Why not write about them too?

Small Ads

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