

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

DECEMBER 2003

NUMBER 385

Memories of Upchurch



Horsham Lane, Upchurch. Edmund Drake was Vicar of Upchurch (the church may be seen in the centre of the photograph) from 1560-67. The interesting history of this gentleman, father of Francis Drake, is retold this month by David Wood, see page 9.

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Next Issue: January 24th 2004
Copy Date: Jan 6th Sm Ads Jan 9th

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

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

Editorial

We have had such a wonderful year, weatherwise, it does not seem possible that December has crept up on us already. Still, hard as it is to believe, here we are preparing for Christmas. Naturally the local schools and churches are hoping for your support at their Christmas Sales and the Lions and Rotary Clubs of Gillingham make it even easier for you to contribute to charity by bringing the collection to your own front door. They will be touring the streets with their Christmas Sleigh on several evenings in December but should you be away from the proposed routes you can catch up with them in Rainham Shopping Precinct on Saturday 13th December. Talking of local shopping areas we include a letter this month from a Parkwood shopkeeper encouraging us all to think of the smaller independent retailers when planning our Christmas shopping this year. Often the small shops can compete on price but even when this is impossible, service, knowledge and after sales assistance can be invaluable. As Mrs Redpath says, if you want to retain a good variety of local shops please support them by at least giving them a chance to compete with the multinationals and shopping malls. When you add in the time and energy it takes to drive to Bluewater and Lakeside compared with nipping down to a nearby outlet perhaps local does have its advantages, and at last work is underway on the extension to the Rainham Cricketers car park so this should make life easier.

Fund raising fashions come and go, since the boot sale concept arrived jumble sales are a thing of the past but I am pleased to see in the diary at least one jumble sale planned for the new year. If you have a secret hoard of good quality goods waiting for a suitable home the organisers would welcome contributions from 9.00am on January 10th at St Matthew's Community Centre. Willing helpers are needed by at least two groups this month.

The Friends of St Margaret's Church have vacancies on their committee for anyone who values the building, you do not have to be a member of the church to appreciate its importance as one of the few historic buildings in the area. If you would like to know more about the 'Friends' Ann Gray on 372680 would be delighted to help you. A local Rainbow Group (the youngest members of Girlguiding UK) also needs help; if you have always fancied using

sticky backed plastic and making Blue Peter models but had no excuse, this kind of activity and much more makes up the Rainbow programme, ring 231324 to find out more.

As always our next Action Forum will be a combined January and February edition to be published on January 24th 2004. This originally started thirty years ago during the three day working week period of 1974, when it was very difficult to produce non essential printed matter, but the arrangement suits everyone for several reasons, not least that it gives our very loyal distributors a short holiday and hopefully misses the worst of the winter weather when trudging the streets, so until then have a Very Happy Christmas and we will see you again in 2004.

Correspondence

HOSPITAL RADIO MEDWAY
Dear Editor,

Hospital Radio Medway need help in several positions. If you have some spare time and are interested in helping this worthy cause we are looking for help in the following ways:
Ward Representatives – meeting the patients and collecting musical requests.

Engineers – caring for the equipment
Librarians – indexing the record library
Personal Assistants – prepared to help wherever needed

Programme Presenters – a position to be gained a little later in service.

These positions are available to all aged twenty years and over. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Don Brunton
Medway Hospital,
Gillingham,

Kent, ME7 7NY
01634 406865

MANTISSA OPERA
Dear Editor,

The Mantissa Opera present A Christmas Concert at Gillingham Methodist Church, Third Avenue, Gillingham, on December 13th at 7.30pm. The tickets are £10 and may be booked by ringing Simon Tatnall on 01634 575842. The concert will include Christmas favourites, opera and show songs and a mince pie or two! We look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely
Simon Tatnall

PLEASE DON'T FORGET US!

Dear Editor,

I would just like to ask all the residents of Rainham to remember their local shops when hunting for Christmas pressies this year.

We too cater for Christmas each year as do the big stores, but somehow seem to be forgotten all too easily. This is a shame as local shops tend to provide a friendly, personal service and are generally more helpful than the average chain store. We can also

have unusual nik naks that make excellent gifts and at affordable prices. You will even save time and money by shopping locally! Most of us regularly support various local charities, so they too would benefit.

Sadly, local shops may soon become a thing of the past with more and more grand shopping malls appearing. I am sure we will be missed, so rather than regret it, please prevent it by becoming a regular customer.

Kind regards,
Linda Redpath (Mrs)
Proprietor, Class Act,
4 Parkwood Green
Shopping Centre.
01634 371999

MIERS COURT CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Dear Editor,

It is time again for Miers Court School to open its doors to the local community and say 'Welcome to our Christmas Fayre' on Saturday 6th December, 11am to 2pm. There will be gifts, games, crafts, food, competitions, Father Christmas in his grotto and of course the children entertaining.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely,
Felicity Holton
Miers Court PTFA
01634 381095

A KENTISH CHILDHOOD

Dear Editor,

With regard to the closing of the Council School (Meredale) at the end of the Summer Term and the interest the reunion aroused among past pupils I thought many of them may like to know that my next book entitled 'A Kentish Childhood', recently published in November by SB Publications at £6.50, includes, amongst much else, text about the Council School and its teachers 1935-40 and also the Senior School 1940-43. A section about my childhood in Rainham includes Empire Day, Co-op Treats, the Twopenny Rush at the Bughutch, Otterham Creek and the Barges, Butterfly Collecting at Queendown Warren, Hop Picking at Scotts and learning the piano with Mrs Nutt of Tufton Road. Two thirds of the book, which is illustrated by postcards and drawings, concerns other childhood topics from the Edwardian period to the 1960s including skipping and other outdoor games, comics, autograph albums and Children's Hour.

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I was very pleased to meet so many friends at the reunion, some of whom I had not seen since I left school in 1943 and especially my first teacher Miss Cheeseman and to see her so well and active.

Yours sincerely,
Alan Major
41 Heaton Road,
Canterbury CT1 3PY
01227 459246

BURNS NSIGHT BARN DANCE

Dear Editor,

Medway and Maidstone VSO group will be holding their annual BURNS' NIGHT BARN DANCE fund raising event on Saturday 24th January 2004 at Fort Pitt Grammar School for Girls, Fort Pitt Hill, Chatham, starting at 7.30pm – long-time supporters will notice this is a new venue for us. We welcome the return of 'Pilgrims Way' and their excellent caller to supply the music and a hot supper will be provided although we ask participants to bring their own drinks and glasses. You will need them! This is always a popular event, tickets being priced at £8.00 and must be bought in advance. If any Action Forum readers would like further details or tickets please phone Pam or Philip Cole on Medway 376608.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,
Pam Cole (VSO Local
Events Co-ordinator)

JUMBLE SALE

Dear Editor,

The Parish of South Gillingham Dortmund Exchange Group are holding a Jumble Sale in St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, on 10th January at 11.00am. Admission will be 25p. Good quality jumble will be welcomed at the Centre from 9.00am.

Yours sincerely,
David Lewis
(Chairman Dortmund
Exchange 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: 6th January 2004

- December 6th – Instep Dancing. Social/Dance, Rainham School for Girls. Ballroom/Latin/Sequence. 8.00 to 11.00pm. Details 363738.
- December 6th – Parks and Green Space Events, Christmas Crafts Workshop. Capstone Farm Country Park. Tel: 01634 812196 for details.
- December 6th – Medway Folk Dance Club. 7.30 to 10.00pm, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham.
- December 6th – St Peter's CHRISTMAS FAYRE. 2.00pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood Road. Charity Shop next door also open from 1.30pm.
- December 6th – St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. 2nd Christmas Tree Festival. Admission Free, 10.00am to 4.00pm. Carol Singing led by Gillingham Salvation Army Band at 7.00pm in the Church. Admission Free with a collection in aid of the Salvation Army.
- December 6th – Miers Court Primary School CHRISTMAS FAYRE. 11.00am to 2.00pm. Games, gifts, grotto and lots of fun. Everyone welcome.
- December 6th – Deanwood PET School's Christmas Fayre, 11.00am to 3.00pm at the school. All welcome.
- December 6th – Hartlip Church Christmas Bazaar. 2.00pm at the Village Hall, all welcome.
- December 6th to the 8th – St Matthew's Church 2nd Christmas Tree Festival. Details telephone 235056.
- December 7th – Medway Towns Footpath Group.

- Meet 10.00am Upchurch River Valley Golf Course. No dogs.
- December 7th – Park and Green Space Events. Capstone Walk, Capstone Farm Country Park. £1.60 per person. Book in advance 01634 812196.
- December 8th – Rainham Darby & Joan Club. 2.00 to 4.00pm, Rainham Social Club, Station Road. Over 50s welcome.
- December 8th – Rainham Wives – 8.00pm Methodist Church Hall, Rainham. New members, all ages welcome. Christmas Meal. Details 230639.
- December 9th – Rainham Evening Machine Knitting Club. 8.00 to 10.00pm. Red Cross Centre, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. Contact no. 862673.
- December 9th – Gillingham & District Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society. Christmas Party. 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls.
- December 10th – Rainham Flower Club (Kent) Christmas Party. 7.30 to 9.30pm in Upchurch Village Hall.
- December 10th – Bredhurst WI. Magician – Graham Murray. Competition: Miles from Bredhurst. 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall.
- December 10th – Medway Camcorder Club. Cheese 'n' Wine, 'Nibbles'. 7.30pm Medway Motor Yacht Club, Medway Bridge Marina, Manor Lane, Borstal, Rochester.
- December 11th – Wigmore Thursday Club. History of the Pillar Box, by Avic Harms. 2.00pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. For people over the age of 50. For further information telephone 235507.
- December 11th – Wigmore MADS present a Christmas Concert 'SONG NOEL' at St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, at 8.00pm. Tickets £3.50, £3.00 concessions. Box Office: Sue on Medway 370639.
- December 11th – Rotary Christmas Float tour Marshall road area from 6.00pm.
- December 12th – Gillingham and Rainham Local



- History Society. Yesterdays Papers. 7.15pm, Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham.
- December 13th – Carve Up (come and enjoy a meal and entertainment) at Bredhurst Village Hall. Fund Raising Event (Ticket only). Tel: 01634 362843.
- December 13th – Rotary Christmas Float Rainham Precinct, 9.00am to 1.00pm.
- December 13th – Mantissa Opera present A Christmas Concert, 7.30pm, Gillingham Methodist Church, Third Avenue, Gillingham. Tickets, including a mince pie or two, £10 from 575842.
- December 13th – Kent Wildlife Trust Guided Walk, 9.30am to 4.00pm, Riverside Country Park. Ring Geoff Orton 07788 102238 for details.
- December 13th – National Childbirth Trust Children's Christmas Party, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall, 2.30 to 4.30pm. £5.50. Phone 07950 898939 for details.
- December 13th & 14th – Parks and Green Space Events. Christmas Fair. Riverside Country Park. For further details telephone 01634 378987.
- December 14th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.00am, Harrietsham Church. 5 mile walk. No dogs.
- December 15th – Rainham Evening WI Christmas Party. Belly Dancing- Mrs H. Whitehouse. Competition: A Star-shaped Object. 7.30pm. Platters Farm Lodge, Highfield Road, Rainham.
- December 15th – Rainham Darby and Joan Club. (see 8th Dec)
- December 15th – Lions Club Santas Sleigh, Hempstead, 6.00 to 8.15pm.
- December 16th – Wigmore Men's Fellowship. 'Quiz Night', 8.00pm. Closed meeting.
- December 16th – Rotary Christmas Float, Chalky Bank area from 6.00pm.
- December 16th – Lions Club Santas Sleigh, Hempstead, 6.00 to 8.15pm.
- December 17th – Wigmore Afternoon Townswomen's Guild. Christmas Party. 1.45 to 4.15pm, Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore.
- December 17th – Bredhurst Garden Club. Christmas Dinner. Members only.
- December 17th – Rotary Christmas Float, Station Road to Ten Acre Way from 6.00pm.
- December 17th – Lions Club Santas Sleigh, Twydall, 6.00 to 8.15pm.

- December 18th – Rainham Afternoon WI. Christmas Party. 1.45pm, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham.
- December 18th – Wigmore Thursday Club. Carol Service. (see 11th Dec)
- December 18th – Lions Club Santas Sleigh, Twydall, 6.00 to 8.15pm.
- December 19th – Gillingham Recorded Music Society. Social Evening. Fairy Stories presented by Ken Purton. 7.15 to 9.15pm, St Augustine's Church Room (top of Rock Avenue), Gillingham.
- December 19th – Rotary Christmas Float, Taverners Road to Thames Avenue, from 6.00pm.
- December 19th – Lions Club Santas Sleigh, Parkwood, 6.00 to 8.15pm.
- December 20th – Instep Dancing. (see 6th Dec)
- December 20th – Medway Folk Dance Club. (see 6th Dec)
- December 22nd – Parks and Green Space Events. Christmas Crafts, Riverside Country Park, 10.30 to 12 noon and 1.30 to 3.00pm. Book in advance. 01634 378987.
- December 22nd – Rainham Darby & Joan Club. (see 8th Dec)
- December 22nd – Lions Club Santas Sleigh, Parkwood, 6.00 to 8.15pm.
- December 23rd – Lions Club Santas Sleigh, Twydall, 6.00 to 8.15pm.
- December 26th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.30am, The Green, Bearsted. 4 mile walk.

DIARY 2004

- January 1st – Wigmore Men's Fellowship. New Year' Day Walk to Stockbury. Open meeting.
- January 1st – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.00am, Lower Halstow (Three Tuns). 5-6 mile walk.
- January 1st – Countryside Event. New Year's Walk. 10.00am to 12 noon. Capstone Farm Country Park. Ring 812196 for details.
- January 2nd – Countryside Event. Children's Nature Day, 10.00am to 12 noon, Capstone Farm Country Park. £1.60 per child (under 8 accompanied). Ring 812196 to book.
- January 4th – Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.00am, Shorne Wood Country Park. 4½ mile walk.

Continued on page 11

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Rainbows are aged 5-7 and like making things,
playing games, singing, etc. We meet at Rainham
Mark Grammar School on Tuesday evenings from
5.15pm to 6.15pm (term time only). We need some
additional adult help in the form of assistants.

If you could help us please phone Brown Owl on
231324.

Julie Mutton (Unit Guider)

**JOE AND
THE FRIENDS OF ST MARGARET'S CHURCH**

Many of you have been to Joe Ennis's illustrated
talks in St Margaret's Church on 'Rainham Past and
Present' and found them very informative and
interesting. The three talks together raised the
magnificent sum of £2,400, all of which has gone
towards the upkeep of our beautiful medieval church.

We would like to express our very grateful thanks
to Joe for all the hard work which he put into the
talks, and indeed for all the time and energy which he
spent on 'The Friends' while on the committee, for
some time as chairman and secretary. 'The Friends'
are without doubt indebted to Joe and his wife Eve.
We have enjoyed her generous hospitality on many
occasions. Joe and Eve, thank you.

We are in need of more committee members, so if
any of you would like to join us please do not hesitate
to get in touch, membership of 'The Friends' is open
to all. Come and join a small group working for a
very worthy cause.

Ann Gray, Chairman, 372680

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Association has been in existence for more than 16
years there is just a chance that some residents will be
unaware of us. Our aim is to do all that we can to
ensure that Wigmore continues to be a safe and
pleasant place in which to live. We achieve this by
taking up with the local authority and our elected
representatives matters which are of concern to our
members; relevant to Wigmore and the area in which
we live.

Membership is open to all households in the
Wigmore area and costs £1 per household per year
(£5 for 5 years the preferred payment) irrespective of
the number in the household.

***PLEASE JOIN US**

Contacts are John on 361975 or Bob on 378769
We are also seeking members who would wish to
serve as Committee Members. This will include some
to shadow existing office holders wishing to stand
down. The task is not arduous and involves only
some 5/6 meetings per year. Please support us to
ensure that WCRA remains able to maintain its role
for the community of Wigmore.

**WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT - YOU DON'T
KNOW WHEN YOU WILL NEED OURS**

PANTOMIMES

The Central Theatre, Chatham, presents 'SNOW
WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS'.
From 10th December 2003 to 4th January 2004.
Box Office 01634 338338.

The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, presents 'SNOW
WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS'.
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The Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone, presents 'DICK
WHITTINGTON'. From 5th December 2003 to 11th
January 2004. Box Office 01622 758611.

The Orchard Theatre, Dartford, presents 'PETER
PAN'. From 5th December 2003 to 11th January
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

It was on a dull November afternoon that I turned off the Old Ferry Road at Kingsferry Bridge and walked along the north bank of The Swale to Elmley Island.

Fortunately, the tide was out and there were plenty of ducks and waders feeding on the exposed mud of the river. But, unfortunately, the light was bad and the birds were not as readily identifiable as they would have been on a sunny day. Furthermore, I was highly visible as I walked along the top of the embankment and the birds were nervous about my presence. Because of their white colouring the three species that stood out in the mud were the large numbers of black headed gulls and a small group each of avocet and little egret.

The avocet is a tall and slender wader, is white with black markings and has a long upturned bill. The little egret is a heron of slender build and white plumage. The male was once persecuted for the long plumes that it grows during the breeding season.

As I walked along the river bank I could just see, across the marshes of the Isle of Sheppey, the high ground on which Minster sits. Feeding among the murk of the marshes would have been thousands of unseen teal and wigeon.

I noted various sea water plants below the embankment. There were carpets of glasswort or marsh samphire which had turned from green to red like autumn leaves. Ashes of the plant, which looks more like a cactus than a herb, were once used in glass making as a source of carbonate of soda. The plant can, however, be boiled, covered in butter and eaten. Also evident were sea purslane, sea beet and golden samphire, all of which had long since flowered and gone to seed.

In due course I came to the small dock and wooden jetty which served the Turkey Cement Works on the Isle of Elmley. The skeletal remains of a Thames barge lie in the mud of the dock. Cormorants perch on the remaining wooden posts of the jetty whilst they dry their outstretched wings.

Apart from a few concrete structures, the cement works have long since been cleared away. The houses

of the cement workers and their families and a public house called The Globe have likewise been cleared. The wind pump above the village well, having lost most of its sails, is a somewhat sad sight. Rabbits burrowing in the village rubbish dump have revealed broken crockery, cockle and whelk shells and animal bones. The seeds of the weeds growing on the derelict site attract birds such as goldfinches, linnets and reed buntings.

I walked up the hill towards Kingshill Farm which is now the home of the warden of the RSPB bird reserve on the island. I came to the remains of the old school which was built for the children both of the cement workers in the village and of farm workers on the island generally. It closed in 1919, a few years after the cement works were closed and the workers and their families had to leave the island. In one of the former classrooms was a barn owl box. Watery white droppings below it indicated that a family of barn owls had been reared there this year.

I sat down on a bench under a small oak tree. The bench was dedicated to 'Lewis Alfred Gransden. 1914-1995. Husband, Father and Grandfather.' (The Gransdens farmed at Kingshill Farm between 1930 and 1972.) Behind me, and next to the school, once stood St James' Church. In its last years of use it was cared for by Martha Dodd from the village and Emily Gransden from the farm. It was demolished after the 1953 floods and the rubble was used to rebuild the sea walls.

From the direction of The Swale I could hear the calls of curlew and redshank. I could just see the site of the Elmley Ferry by means of which Wade children from the village and Gransden children from Kingshill Farm went to school in Murston after the closure of Elmley school.

I was reminded of the words of Professor W.G. Hoskins in his book 'The Making of the English Language Landscape'. He was referring to the site of a village in medieval times as a result of sheep enclosures. But what he said about that medieval village applies just as aptly to the Victorian village of Elmley which was deserted within living memory. He said this: 'It is a melancholy place to visit on a winter's afternoon; a touching little piece of English history'.

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THE REAL EDMUND DRAKE, VICAR OF UPCHURCH, 1560-1567

One of the things you will be told about local history when you come to Upchurch is that Sir Francis Drake's father was vicar of the village church. Unfortunately little more information is usually given. So who was this man whose son gained world fame as an adventurer and pirate? He certainly was not a conventional priest, as demonstrated by his story of fleeing Devon after criminal activity, living on a shipwreck and then progressing to becoming a village vicar with a wife and twelve children.

Edmund Drake was born into a Devonshire farming family in 1514. He was brought up at Crowndale Farm near Tavistock comprising 157 acres of land, later increased to 191 acres. The family was well off by contemporary standards and the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1524 showed that Edmund personally possessed four pounds sterling in goods aged only ten.

Edmund became a Shearman in the cloth industry but there was only part time work in Tavistock and he disliked it. After what was believed to be a brief period in farming he decided to enter the clergy. Originally he was a Catholic but after the religious changes made during the reign of Henry VIII he was converted to Protestantism at an early age. Little information is available about his ordination as a vicar but it is known that he became a lay preacher in Devon for a while and was vehemently anti Catholic, a trait that his son Francis inherited.

At about the same time in 1539 he got married and his first child Francis was born. He had twelve children in total. During these years Edmund struggled. He had a family to maintain but was unable to live well on his income as a priest. This was probably because he was unable to get promotion in the clergy because he was married. The church at that time preferred priests to be unmarried and celibate. He also failed to inherit the bulk of his father's wealth as he wasn't the eldest child.

According to the English Patent Rolls of 1548 Edmund, with the help of two accomplices, attacked a man named Roger Langiford just outside Tavistock on 16th April 1548. After beating him with staves and swords they stole his purse containing twenty-one shillings and seven pence.

Nine days later Edmund was involved in another incident when he and an accomplice attacked a man named John Harte at Peter Tavy near Tavistock. They

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stole his horse worth three pounds. However, in December 1548 Edmund was pardoned of both crimes. The reason is not clear but G. Woodcock, a local Devon historian, argues that it was due to influence and money. Edmund's father knew the Abbot of Tavistock and Lord Russell who later became godfather to Edmund's son Francis.

Because of the Catholic rebellion in Devon against the imposition of the New English Prayer Book in 1549 Edmund, who may have suffered religious persecution, fled to Plymouth then took refuge in Kent. He found a home in the hulk of an old ship on the banks of the River Medway and became a prayer reader to seamen and shipwrights in Chatham.

Later Edmund applied to the Church authorities in Canterbury to become vicar of Upchurch. He succeeded and took up the position on 25th June 1560. It is not clear how he managed to do this, particularly with regard to his past misdemeanours but influence and his contacts in Devon may have played a part.

At this time the Parish of Upchurch consisted of 40 dwellings and had a population of 250 people. There was also a small port nearby, thought to be at Otterham Quay where six boats were based. Fourteen men from the village worked there and by getting to know them Edmund was able to secure an apprenticeship for his eldest, twelve year old son Francis. Until this time Francis had continued to live in Devon with the family of his cousin John Hawkins who also became a famous seaman.

When he came to Upchurch Francis did not attend school as Edmund taught him to read and write himself and did his best to give him a basic education. After this Francis obtained work on a small vessel that sailed to Kentish and nearby continental ports. He later inherited the boat when the owner who had taken a liking to him died.

Edmund continued as the vicar of Upchurch until his death in 1567. In such a small, rural village he got to know his parishioners very well and settled quickly. He never returned to Devon. According to his will of 26th December 1566 he requested to be buried in Upchurch churchyard. This request was granted when he died in 1567. Since then he has been remembered as the father of Sir Francis Drake. His name has been given to a housing estate in the village known as 'Drake's Close' but few people in Upchurch know the story of the real Edmund Drake.

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January 4th - Kent Wildlife Trust Walk. Oare Marshes Reserve car park, 10.00am to 1.00pm.
January 6th - Wigmore Men's Fellowship. Canadian Rockies, an illustrated talk. 8.00pm, Marlborough Unit, Maidstone Road, Rainham. Closed meeting.
January 8th - Wigmore Thursday Club. History of Hempstead from WW2 to present day. (see 11th Dec)
January 9th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society. Faversham Church and Abbey. Mr A. Percival. (see 12th Dec)
January 10th - JUMBLE SALE, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, starting at 11.00am. Entrance 25p. Good quality jumble will be welcomed at the Centre from 9.00am.
January 10th - Medway Folk Dance Club. (see 6th Dec)
January 11th - Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.00am, Capstone Country Park car park. 6 mile walk.
January 12th - Medway Spinners, Dyers & Weavers Association. Spinning. 7.30 to 9.30pm at the Annexe (Urchins Playgroup) building in Marlborough Road, Gillingham.
January 12th - Rainham Wives. 'New Year Party' and get together. 8.00pm, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham.
January 13th - Gillingham & District Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society. Phil Outred - Tips on how to make up, and plant Fuchsia Baskets. (see 9th Dec)
January 14th - Countryside Event - Motney Hill Bird Walk, 1.00 to 3.00pm. Book in advance, £1.60, ring 378987.
January 15th - Wigmore Thursday Club. Bingo (see 11th Dec)
January 16th - Gillingham Recorded Music Society. Klever Kaff letters and diaries of Kathleen



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Ferrier, Christopher Fifield. (see 19th Dec)
January 16th - Countryside Event, Birdwatching Cruise, book and pay in advance £17.50. Ring 378987.
January 18th - Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 2.00pm, Church on Southborough Common, Tunbridge Wells. 5 mile walk. no dogs.
January 19th - Rainham Wives. 'New Books', a talk by Victoria Golding. (see 12th Jan)
January 20th - Wigmore Men's Fellowship. AGM. (see 6th Jan)
January 20th - The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - Birds and Weather. 7.45 to 10.00pm, Strood Library, Bryant Road.
January 21st - Bredhurst Garden Club. Mr H.C. Newman - Illustrated talk 'Water Gardens'. Hyacinth Show. 8.00pm, Bredhurst Village Hall.
January 21st - Countryside Event, Exploring Grain Foreshore, 10.00am to 12 noon. £1.60. Book on 812196.
January 22nd - Wigmore Thursday Club. MHS Talk on Retirement Housing.
January 23rd - The Medway Geographical Society. Walking Tour of the Islamic World - Mr David Wise. 7.30 to 9.00pm, Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham.
January 24th - Medway and Maidstone VSO Group. Burns Night Barn Dance with 'Pilgrims Way' Fort Pitt Grammar School for Girls, Chatham. 7.30pm. Tickets £8.00 (inc hot supper). Contact Medway 376608 to book.
January 25th - Medway Towns Footpath Group. Meet 10.30am, Reculver public car park. 5 mile walk.
January 25th - Kent Wildlife Trust Walk - Elmley Reserve car park, 10.00am to 2.00pm.
January 26th - Medway Spinners, Dyers & Weavers Association. Sylvia - Tapestry Weaving
January 26th - Rainham Wives. 'Scarves', a talk by Mrs M. Lewis.

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Sunday 7th December
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