

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■

NOVEMBER 2010

NUMBER 460



W.H. Barling Drapery Stores on the corner of Ivy Street about one hundred years ago. The business had previously been owned by Walter Rush. This is one of over 180 pictures and illustrations included in 'A Third Picture Book of Old Rainham' which was published in February (available price £7.99 from Sunburst Books, 21 Station Road, mail order ring 01634 310011 (add £2.75 postage) online via Abebooks.co.uk or Amazon.co.uk - £4 from each sale is donated to St Margaret's Church). On page 2 we include a letter from Wendy Bean (nee Green) updating the history of the shop her parents ran for nearly 30 years from 1935.

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## Editorial

Fireworks are dangerous things. Fifty years ago the emergency services usually had one of their busiest periods around November 5th each year. Before the days of 'Health and Safety', which we all like to ridicule with our favourite anecdotes of prohibited cooker fights or pancake tossing races, casualty departments in hospitals admitted many very serious injuries as a result of inexperienced firework handlers getting it wrong. Most families celebrated Guy Fawkes downfall with a bonfire and a few fireworks in the back garden. The next morning the air was heavy with bonfire smoke and spent rockets littered the streets. Fortunately this practice has mostly been consigned to history and it is now the norm to attend one of the large spectacular events provided by experts. Even at these well regulated gatherings accidents can of course happen so care is still needed but generally they are fun occasions with plenty of 'ohs' and 'arhs' as the show lights. Upchurch has been hosting one such display for the past thirty years initially instigated by the One o'clock Club, a group of friends who met each Sunday in the local pub at that time, but, when regulations became too expensive and complicated continued by the local Scout group to the present day. Our publication date means this years event may well be over before you receive Action Forum but hopefully many copies will be delivered by November 6th and the attendance figures will make this a bumper year for the organisers. On page 9 we include a brief history of Upchurch Fireworks and ways you can help the event in the future - next year will soon come round. By the end of November Christmas is very much in evidence. We include numerous Fayres, Sales and Concerts in our Diary all with the season of goodwill in mind! These are the mainstay of many charities fund raising calendar and vital to provide the money to keep them alive and active in their chosen sphere. Please support those you can and enjoy the social aspect of the gatherings besides contributing to their funds. Elsewhere in our pages you will find details of concerts, a new social group 'The Monday Hub', memories of Rainham long ago and initial attempts to form a Friends of Demelza group locally. Plenty to keep you busy over the coming few weeks and of course our regular item Joe Ennis's Nature Notes which this month explore Wakehurst Place plus in the

diary many organised walks are listed which you are very welcome to join. Have a very good month and enjoy the autumn colours. All too soon winter will be here keeping us indoors for a while, but before that we will see you again in December.

## Correspondence

### MEMORIES OF RAINHAM

Dear Editor

One of my old school friends was kind enough to send me a copy of the Third Picture Book of Rainham. On page 19 is a picture of Barlings Drapery Store, 133 High Street, on the corner of the High Street and Ivy Street. I would like to fill in some of the years between Barlings and 1963.

My parents Mr and Mrs Arthur Green moved to Rainham soon after I was born in August 1935. They rented the shop and living space above from Mr Packer and opened a lending library at 133. Mrs Oldfield rented the adjoining shop and ran it with her daughter and niece Sylvia and Nellie as a Florist shop. My father was in the Marines so my mother ran our shop all through the war and until my father retired after 28 years of service in 1949.

They decided to use his pension and transform the library into a Newsagents, Tobacconists and Stationers. I was then 14 years old so expected to help by doing two paper rounds before school and two more after school each day. This was made easier when my dad bought me a new bike - my pride and joy! At weekends I helped in the shop while my father sold papers outside the White Horse Pub at the top of Station Road.

At that time we knew everyone in Rainham and my father especially for his endeavours to help the old people by raising money for them. He also started a petition for a larger Post Office in Rainham which was ultimately successful. My mother continued to work alongside also bringing up five children.

We all worked hard in those days and had very little leisure time, but looking back what a wonderful time that was to grow up. We had good friends, we were safe on the streets and were happy and contented with what little we had.

My parents continued to run the shop for almost thirty years until their deaths in 1963.

Yours sincerely  
 Wendy Bean (nee Green)  
 7570 E Speedway Blvd Unit 572  
 Tucson AZ 85710 USA  
 Email [wendyandrick@cox.net](mailto:wendyandrick@cox.net)

### THE MONDAY HUB

Dear Editor

Readers of Action Forum may like to know that a new meeting place is opening its doors on Monday 8th November at St Paul's Church in Deanwood Drive, Parkwood. It will be also open on 22nd November, 6th and 20th December, and 3rd, 17th and 31st January 2011 with further dates to be confirmed.

The Monday "Hub" will be open from 10.00m - 1.00pm with light refreshments, conversation and much more. We hope it will be a place where good ideas can be turned into actions, where needs can be met and new friendships made. Parkwood has a large free car park and is served by local buses.

If you are free on any (or all) of those Monday mornings, why not come along and start your week with the Monday Hub? If you would like to speak to somebody first, do phone Jennie Spalding on 360664 and somebody will meet you at the door.

Yours sincerely  
 The Monday Hub Team

### 1st RAINHAM GUIDE COMPANY

Dear Editor,

I have my own copy of the photo of the 1st Rainham Guide Company which appeared on the front of last month's Action Forum. I think the date is out by two or three years. I'm the one in the middle holding the flag, standing between Chris Partridge and Valerie Goodhew. I wasn't a patrol leader or even a guide in 1940. I was being bombed in Plymouth or Hampton Court then and didn't return to Rainham until 1941.

On looking at the photo again after so long, I recognise most of the faces and remember the names of about half the guides. I wonder where they are now.

Yours sincerely,  
 Joy Rowland  
[joy\\_rowland@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:joy_rowland@yahoo.co.uk)

### MEDWAY URBAN PARKS & Green Spaces Forum

Dear Editor,

The Forum is expanding its activities in relation to the use, protection and enhancement of our outdoor leisure and recreation areas.

We are assisting with the inauguration of new Friends Groups for the Great Lines Heritage Park and Horsted Valley, liaising with prospective groups in two areas of Gillingham, adding to the 25 already linked with related amenity, heritage and historical projects and developing links with Groups in Swale and Maidstone.

We desperately need more Committee members to come forward at our fifth AGM, at Medway Council's Gun Wharf Offices on Wednesday 10th November at 7.00pm as we are losing four Officers. Anyone interested is asked to contact me for more information.

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### ST MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY CONCERT

Dear Editor

Jill Daniels - Saturday 13th November, 7.30pm  
 The third concert in the Community Concert Programme stars Jill Daniels who has been hailed as "The Modern Day Vera Lynn" and is now known nationally and internationally as Britain's No1 singer of WWII Songs and Patriotic Anthems. The concert will include medleys of well known songs for example: Shine On Harvest Moon, Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey and Bye Bye Blackbird; and traditional favourites like Land of Hope and Glory and We'll Meet Again. There will be plenty of opportunity to sing along.

AF Readers can be assured of an evening packed full of nostalgia. Tickets (£7.50 each), from 01634 372508, [mattconcerts@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mattconcerts@hotmail.co.uk) or by writing sae please, to 42 The Goldings, Rainham ME8 0AX.

Yours sincerely  
 Paul Warren

### CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

Dear Editor

I am writing to inform readers that Bredhurst Woodland Action Group are holding their Christmas Carol Concert on Thursday 2nd December. The Cantium Singers, a Rochester based 50 strong choir, will be performing at St Peter's Church, Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst at 7.30pm. This will be followed by mulled wine, mince pies and a raffle in the grounds of Green Court, The Street. Also at Green Court will be the 'Staggen Sleddog' Siberian Husky Team. Tickets are £6 per person (under 16s free if accompanied by a ticket holding adult) from Jim Chalmers on 07870 878907 or Pam Newman on 01634 233433. Tickets are only available in advance, not be on sale on the day. BWAG members and non-members most welcome.

Yours faithfully  
 Vanessa Jones

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# Diary 2010

No charge is made for Diary entries  
Copy should be in writing either by email to  
[af@thenet.uk.net](mailto:af@thenet.uk.net) or

5, Meresborough Cottages, Meresborough,  
Gillingham, Kent ME8

Diary Copy Date: 17th November

November 6th – Charity Concert, Gillingham Methodist  
Church, Third Avenue, 7.30pm Tickets £5 on the door

November 6th – Annual Craft Fair 10.00am – 1.00pm.  
Rainham Methodist Church Hall. Entrance 30p.

November 6th – Medway Folk Dance Club, United  
Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham  
7.30 – 10.00pm. New and experienced dancers  
welcome, with or without a partner for more  
information ring 366189 or 388546.

November 6th – Upchurch Family Fireworks. Gates open  
5.30pm, Westmoor Farm, just off the A2, Rainham. Car  
parking Free on the site. Adult £7, Child £5, Family (2  
plus 2 under 16s) £20 pay at the gate.

November 7th – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Arthur &  
Jan Waters 01634 711734, 10.00am, Higham, lay-by  
(Old Gravesend Road) 0.4km SE John Falstaff PH for  
an 8.8 mile walk. Bring picnic lunch, Pub at end.

November 7th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, meet  
Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 828249 10.00am,  
Camer Country Park for a 6 mile flat walk through  
orchards and farmland to Cobham. Dogs allowed.

November 8th – Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group  
for those still in employment 7.15 – 9.00pm,  
Millennium Centre, Rainham, ring 01634 364309.

November 8th – The Monday "Hub" a new meeting place,  
St Paul's Church, Deanwood Drive, Parkwood, 10am –  
1pm, light refreshments, lively conversation and much  
more. Free car park, for more details ring Jennie  
Spalding 01634 360664

November 8th – Parkwood Leisure Club, St Paul's  
Church, Parkwood each Monday 2.00pm. Bingo. New  
members most welcome, 01634 366056 or 261098.

November 8th – Rainham Wives meet 8.00pm Methodist  
Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham, 'Just Soe'  
hairdressing evening with Julie. New members of all  
ages are very welcome. We have a variety of  
speakers/activities etc. Subs £1.50 per meeting, this  
includes coffee and biscuits, for more details contact  
Sue on 01634 230639.

November 9th – Fairview Frogs parent/carer and  
toddler group every Tuesday in term time, 10.00 –  
11.30am Fairview Community Primary School,  
messy and fun activities, more details 01634 338710.

November 9th – Medway Antique & Collector's Club,  
7.30 for 8.00pm, St George Hotel, New Road,  
Chatham, Miss Anne Carter – A Celebration of  
Christmas, Visitors £2.50 anyone interested welcome,  
ring 01474 823606 for details.

November 10th – Tiny Tots, Riverside Country Park  
10.00am – 2.00pm. For accompanied children 2 – 5  
years, Please wear old clothes as it could get messy.  
Drop in any time no need to book £1 per child.

November 10th – Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm  
Upchurch Village Hall, Christmas Workshop  
'Running rings around a candle' details 01795  
425700 or see [www.rainhamflowerclub.uk.com](http://www.rainhamflowerclub.uk.com)

November 10th – Rainham Poetry Group, 7.30pm, 40,  
Birling Avenue, all lovers of poetry welcome, ring  
01634 260228 for details.

November 10th – Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm, Bredhurst  
Village Hall, A Master Doll Maker- Sue Wood, ring  
01634 232617 for more details.

November 10th – 14th - Autumn Moon Watch, Mid-  
Kent Astronomical Society (MKAS) Dockside Car  
Park, Chatham (by the cinema), 7.30 – 10.00pm  
anyone interested welcome to view objects such as  
the moon and Jupiter For more information see web  
site <http://www.midkentastro.org.uk/>

November 11th – Fairview Tadpoles Parent and Baby  
Group every Thursday in term time 1.15 – 2.45pm  
Fairview Community School, details 01634 338710

November 11th – Hempstead Leisure Club for over 50's  
– Games, tea & chat. Hempstead Village Hall, behind  
All Saints Church, 169 Hempstead Road, 2-4pm.  
New members welcome. Phone 01634 366907.

November 11th – Wigmore Thursday Club, Bingo, St  
Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive,

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Wigmore, 2.00pm. For people over the age of 50, ring  
235507 for details.

November 12th – Rainham Bereavement Friendship  
Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham, every Friday  
9.45am – 12noon to help people who have lost their  
spouse or a close relative, join us for a cuppa and chat,  
ring Julie on 01634 364309 for details.

November 12th – Gillingham and Rainham Local  
History Society, United Reformed Church, Balmoral  
Road, Gillingham, 7.15pm. Mrs Lawrence, Hop  
Picking in Kent, contact Mr Baker, 01634 854982.

November 12th – MKAS meet at Bredhurst Village Hall  
second and last Friday each month, Greg Smye  
Rumsby. For observing they meet on other Fridays at  
the Victoria Hotel Canterbury. Details phone Trev on  
07717 678795 or see [www.midkentastro.org.uk/](http://www.midkentastro.org.uk/)

November 13th – Christmas Craft Fayre for 4th  
Gillingham (Rainham) Sea Scout Group, St. Georges  
Hall, Berengrave Lane, 1pm-4pm. Christmas gifts and  
crafts. £1 entry, refreshments, details contact Julie on  
07759 539796 or [julie206@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:julie206@blueyonder.co.uk)

November 13th – St Matthew's Community Concert,  
7.30pm, Jill Daniels 'The modern day Vera Lynn'  
patriotic songs. Tickets £7.50 from 01634 372508 or  
[mattconcerts@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mattconcerts@hotmail.co.uk) or by writing with a sac  
please, to 42 The Goldings, Rainham ME8 0AX.

November 13th – Wisdom for Wildlife, 6.30 – 10.00pm  
– Parkwood School. Teams up to 8 people, £10 pp  
includes great food - bring your own drink and glasses,  
01622 662012 email [community@kentwildlife.org.uk](mailto:community@kentwildlife.org.uk)

November 13th – Instep Dancing, Rainham School for  
Girls, Derwent Way, Ballroom, Latin, Sequence  
dancing, 8.00 – 11.00pm, ring 01634 363738 or  
[s.collins02@btinternet.com](mailto:s.collins02@btinternet.com) for details.

November 14th – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Tony &  
Ann Faulkner 01634 406634, 10.00am, Cuxton Station  
Approach Road (could be charge) for a 6.5 mile  
Ramblers Baton Walk via Church Hill, Merril's Shaw,  
North Downs Way, Upper Bush, Mausoleum, May's  
Wood and A228. Bring picnic lunch, Pub at end.

November 14th – Medway Towns Footpath Group, meet  
Stephen Manning 01634 375821 10.00am, Green car  
park Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre for a 6 mile  
walk, one steep climb. No Dogs.

November 15th – Parkwood Leisure Club, Maureen and  
John 'Hand Made Crafts'. (see 8th Nov).

November 15th – Rainham Wives The Four Seasons of  
Kent talk by Chris Wade (see 8th Nov).

November 15th – Rainham Evening Women's Institute,  
7.30pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, Tai Chi – Mrs  
Fran Bennett, competition Plastic, ring 372282.

November 15th – Wigmore WI, 7.30pm Scout Hut,  
Edwards Close, Wigmore, ring 263405 for details.

November 16th – Gillingham Horticultural Society  
Floral Art Group, 7.30 – 9.00pm United Reformed  
Church (rear hall), Balmoral Road, Gillingham, Ask  
the experts pre exhibition talk through. Visitors  
welcome contact Kay Buss 01634 232998.

November 16th – RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,  
Strood Library, 7.45 – 10.00pm £3.00. How Birds  
Work – John Buckingham  
[www.medwayrspb.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.medwayrspb.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk).

November 17th – Bredhurst Garden Club, Wendy Small  
talk, 'The Donkey Sanctuary' Gift Stall by Sanctuary,  
8.00pm Bredhurst Village Hall, ring 01634 233554  
for details, new members welcome.

November 18th – Rainham Women Institute 1.45 –  
4.00pm Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, A  
Shopping Trip in Downe in a Bygone Era. Visitors  
welcome for small entry charge 01634 364639.

November 18th – Wigmore Thursday Club, Sanctuary  
Housing – Pat Black, (see 11th Nov).

November 18th – Hempstead Leisure Club, Christmas  
Craft with Rita Woodward (see 11th Nov).

November 19th – HANDS & Gillingham Volunteer  
Centre, Quiz Night, 7.00 for 7.30pm start. Millennium  
Centre, Light buffet but bring your own drinks.  
Tables 6-8 people £6 each. Contact 01634 362119.

November 20th – Christmas shopping at The Wisdom  
Hospice Annual Christmas Fair 10am until 2pm. Over  
20 stalls. Santa will visit 12noon - 2pm Refreshments  
Admission 50p adults. Children free, 01634 831163

November 20th – City of Rochester Symphony  
Orchestra with pianist Alexandr Ardakov Central  
Theatre, Chatham, 7.30pm Borodin 'On the Steppes  
of Central Asia', Shostakovich Piano Concerto and  
Rachmaninov 2nd Symphony. Tickets (£9-14,  
concessions) from the Box Office 01634 338338.

November 20th – Rainham Flower Club 'Ding Dong  
Merrily on High' A Floral Art competition Upchurch  
Village Hall, 2.00 – 5.00pm Teas, Stalls Admission  
£1.50, Presentation of awards 4.00pm.

Continued on Page 11

## K. Gillard

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**WIGMORE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH**  
 Following the publication of the group photograph  
 outside Wigmore Evangelical Free Church which we  
 included in August Doreen Smith, now of Milford on  
 Sea, writes:  
 The founders including Mr Moseley and Mr Nottage  
 met in the home of Mr Jewel after the war. Later they  
 used 3 army huts, the vestry and kitchen across the front  
 and two behind for the hall. Most of the people would  
 have come from other churches.  
 Centre front sits Mr Evenden and on his right William  
 Lockyer who had been a Sunday school teacher in  
 Rainham Methodist Church. The tall man at the back is  
 Mr Groves. By his right elbow is probably "Auntie  
 Ratcliffe". On her right is Mrs Baylis, mother of  
 Dorothy. Mr Baylis did the flower beds and at the time  
 the photograph was taken would have been inside  
 moving chairs. The fair-haired lady behind Mr Evenden  
 is Mrs Tapsil (formerly Mrs Goodspeed), mother of  
 John and Malcolm.

**AUTUMN MOONWATCH**  
 Mid-Kent Astronomical Society (MKAS) is organising  
 a side walk observation Autumn Moonwatch at the  
 Dockside Car Park, Chatham  
 The observation will start on Wednesday 10th  
 November and continue on the following nights,  
 Thursday 11th, Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th at  
 7.30pm until around 10.00pm.

**PARENT AND BABY GROUP**  
 Fairview Community Primary School would like to  
 welcome any new parents or carers to our Parent and  
 Baby Group 'Fairview Tadpoles'.  
 This group is for ALL new mums and dads and takes  
 place on Thursdays from 1.15pm to 2.45pm at a cost of  
 £2.00 a family, term time only, starting back Thursday,  
 11th November.  
 Are you a new parent?  
 Do you need some adult conversation?  
 Have you been attending a Post Natal Group which has  
 now finished? Would you like to continue meeting up  
 on a weekly basis?  
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 I am hoping to introduce a "Friends of Demelza" group  
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 intention to organise a tea/coffee morning on  
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 be fully explained at this initial meeting, and any fund  
 raising ideas gratefully received! Please come along and  
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 Anyone interested in attending please contact Laura, at  
 Demelza on 07717 731625, or Colin on 01634 234973

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**CHRISTMAS CRAFTS BAZAAR**  
 The Friends of Bredhurst Cat Adoption Centre are  
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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR OCTOBER

In October we went to see the autumn colours in the gardens and woodlands of Wakehurst Place in the High Weald of Kent. The property is owned by the National Trust but is managed by the Royal Botanic gardens at Kew. We had a colourful start to our visit in the form of a large area of autumn flowering, white and mauve European cyclamen growing under a group of beech trees. The flowers are native to certain woodland countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. A flock of jackdaws were calling to each other among the branches of the trees.

A Tudor mansion forms the heart of Wakehurst and the gardens around it are where most of the ornamental plants (including some red leaved Japanese maples) can be found. These gardens are also the easiest areas of access to wheelchairs users. Visitors are given a very useful map of the grounds which show the state of the many paths, some of which are steep and unpaved, and the location of numbered signposts.

We ourselves chose to visit the Pinetum and then enjoy the view, from the Pinetum Viewpoint, of the Himalayan Glade. Conifers grow well in the acid soil of the Weald and, in the Pinetum, we came across Scots pine, sitka spruce and Douglas fir, among other trees. Here greenfinches, goldfinches and siskins are regular visitors, whilst hawfinches are occasionally spotted. We saw only a flock of greenfinches recognisable by their powerful, undulating flight but we heard the clinking call of a great spotted woodpecker, a black and white bird, sometimes seen at bird tables.

The Himalayan Glade, as seen from the Pinetum Viewpoint, is a favourite spot for bird watchers. Parkland and woodland birds such as coal tits, marsh tits and nuthatches can sometimes be spotted. We could hear a flock of tits calling to each other but were unable to identify them. We did however hear the unmistakable call of the nuthatch, which has a blue-grey back and which, unlike woodpeckers, can walk down a tree head first. It feeds on nuts, acorns, beech mast and yew seeds and will use a cranny in a rough barked tree, such as an oak, as a vice in which to hold a nut. The calls of the nuthatch are varied but are always clear, musical and of great carrying

power. As for other attractions of the Himalayan Glade, we were able to admire the flaming scarlet leaves of some deciduous berberis shrubs.

We then doubled back to Wakehurst Place and had lunch in the Stables and Tack Room Restaurant. The service was quick but the food was poor value for money. After lunch we went to Horsebridge Wood via Rock Walk. The latter is through rugged outcrops of sandstone in damp, shady woodlands. The rocks are covered in ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens and have been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Horsebridge Wood is a typical English lowland wood of oak, beech and Scots pine trees, among others, with an under storey of heather, bracken and bilberry. Planted there from the 19th century onwards are coastal redwoods, giant redwoods (or Wellingtonias) and Douglas firs from North America. The two redwood trees have soft bark, the fissures in which tree creepers both nest and roost. The bird is mouse-like and is seldom seen doing anything but living up to its name, as it probes nooks and crannies in tree trunks for insects. Also planted within Horsebridge Wood are American maples, birches, hickories and sweetgums. These trees are among the most flamboyant for autumn colour. We sat on one of the many seats scattered around Wakehurst and enjoyed the view. As we were doing so, we heard the raucous alarm call of a jay followed by a fleeting glimpse of a white rump as the bird disappeared into foliage. The jay is the most colourful of all our crows and can often be seen flying from wood to wood across the M2.

Back at the mansion once more, we visited the Winter Garden and the Walled Garden. In the former, brightly coloured dogwood and willow stems contrast with the shapes and colours of the dried leaves of ornamental grasses. Also in the Winter Garden is the national collection of skimmias, shrubs with evergreen foliage and red berries. The Walled garden is a traditional cottage garden in which, during our October visit, roses, dahlias and Michaelmas daisies, among other flowers, were in bloom. We heard the melancholy song of a robin and the loud, scolding call of a wren. A dunno skulked under some bushes.

After a cup of tea and a cake we headed for the exit. We caught up with children in brightly coloured

wellingtons, kicking up leaves to squeals of delight and clutching feathers, sticks and leaves, the latter coloured red, yellow, orange, gold, brown and purple. The children had clearly enjoyed their trip to Wakehurst ... and so had we.

Joe Ennis

## HISTORY OF UPCHURCH FIREWORKS

We have been firing fireworks in Upchurch 'One o'clock Club' a group of people who met in the local pub at 1 pm on a Sunday. Unfortunately, escalating insurance costs prevented them from continuing. The Group Scout Leader managed to secure the display for Upchurch Scout Group who have organised it since 1996 initially in The Paddock.

In 2005 we had to make a tough decision and cancel the display. The Paddock was unsuitable as new regulations doubled the size of the safety zone to 50m. No suitable location was found in the village and the committee were keen not to move the display away. We were however very fortunate to secure the use of Westmoor Farm with just 3 weeks left to prepare everything! It caused us a bit of a headache as Westmoor Farm is just in Medway this meant different Fire brigade, Police & Council Contacts had to be approached. We built the web site and used it to advertise the display and change of venue. This was a great success and our best year ever with an estimated 4000 people despite a rainy build up to the event.

As the event was growing, the costs were increasing. For the first time we had to pay for professional waste clearance from the site as the volume was too great to take home and put in our own wheelie bins! We paid for quality toilet facilities and invested in new lighting and fencing. This coupled with ever increasing insurance costs meant that 2007 made just enough money to keep us going as a group for the year. Although we were providing a value for money event and the feedback was fantastic, our motivation was to fund the Scout Group. The amount of effort being put in was yielding little more than we used to make as a small display in the village. We had however invested in equipment for which we would see the returns in future years.

I think it's fair to say that over the years even before the Scouts took over we only remember making a loss on one occasion due to poor weather. Well 2008 was to be THE unlucky thirteenth year. During the build up it rained solidly for 3 days. On the day the rain was falling heavily but we were all optimistic as forecasters

suggested the rain would clear in the evening. So, cold and wet, we struggled on. At midday we had a meeting to decide if the display should go ahead. From a safety point of view only high winds prevent us from firing but rain does stop people turning up! Once the fireworks are fused and loaded it's pretty much past the point of no return.

By the time we got to gate opening the rain was still falling and the usual queues were not there. Most of us didn't have time to think about whether the right decision had been made as demands on the organising team continue. It wasn't until the count down to the firing started that we were able to take a step back and realise that, with just a few hundred people in the arena, it wasn't going to be a good year financially. Ironically the forecast was right and the rain stopped just before we started firing but it was too late. Those that did brave the weather commented that the display was spectacular, one of our best ever. If only the rain had stopped half an hour earlier, it might have been a very different story. We had always preferred to maintain reserve funds as a group rather than pay for cancellation insurance and now it was necessary to use that reserve. In view of the potential risk to the group the committee voted by majority not to put on a display in 2009.

In 2010, we are back. We have learned some lessons and worked hard to cut costs. Our focus is to ensure more money is available to our young people in the Upchurch Scout Group.

We cannot guarantee the weather and we do need your support. So please do join us on Saturday 6th November at Westmoor Farm on the A2 next to Otterham Quay Lane. Full details will be on our website [www.upchurchfireworks.co.uk](http://www.upchurchfireworks.co.uk) In the future there are a number of ways you can help: Turn up and enjoy the night!

Provide assistance to the organisers in setting up on Friday / Saturday and clearing up on Sunday. Volunteer to be a safety marshal-full training is given.

Local businesses are welcome to sponsor us in return for advertising in the arena or on our web site?

Please email us at [upchurchfireworks@talktalk.net](mailto:upchurchfireworks@talktalk.net) Anyone providing assistance or volunteering to be a marshal will be entitled to a free family ticket to the event. Please email us for more details.

Mike Powell  
Chairman Upchurch Family Fireworks

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## Diary 2010

November 20th – Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 6th)

November 21st – Medway Towns Footpath Group, meet  
Pearl Stevens 07724 602929 10.00am, Commuter car  
park near Bredhurst for a 6 mile walk. No Dogs.

November 21st – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Marge  
Goatman, 10.00am, Upchurch Golf Club, Oak Lane  
(please use overflow car park) for a 4 mile pleasant  
circular walk through orchards and rural farmland.

November 22nd – The Monday "Hub"(see 8th Nov).

November 22nd- Parkwood Leisure Club, Christmas  
Lunch (see 8th Nov).

November 22nd – Rainham Wives, Musical Quiz with  
Margaret plus silent auction for charity (see 8th Nov).

November 24th –Upchurch Derby & Joan Club  
Christmas Fair, 10.00am – 12noon Variety of stalls  
including home made cakes, books & crafts. Mulled  
wine and mince pies. Details ring Julia 01634 373723.

November 24th – Rainham Poetry Group, 5.45 – 8.15pm,  
Sunlight Centre, Richmond Road, Gillingham, all  
lovers of poetry welcome, ring 01634 260228.

November 25th – Wigmore Thursday Club, Service  
followed by Kingfisher Singers, (see 11th Nov).

November 25th – Hempstead Leisure Club Games, tea &  
chat (see 11th Nov).

November 25th – Rainham & District Dolls' House and  
Miniaturist Group, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside,  
7.30pm, 01634 312038.

November 26th – Medway Geographical Society, 7.30 –  
9.00pm, Gillingham Adult Education Centre, Green  
Street, 'Australian Highlights' – Elizabeth Sillifant, all  
welcome details 01634 362683.

November 26th – MKAS, Peter Parish - Constellation of  
the month. (see 12th Nov).

November 27th – Christmas Bazaar, Fairview  
Community Primary School, Drewery Drive,  
Wigmore. Doors open at 1.30pm. Admission 30p  
(pre-school free) Further details 01634 302961

November 27th – Instep Dancing, (see 13th Nov).

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November 27th – Meredale School, Solomon Road,  
Rainham, Christmas Arts and Craft Fayre, 12 –3pm.

November 27th – Medway Asthma Self-Help  
(MASH), Christmas Fair, St Margaret's Millennium  
Centre, 11.00am – 3.00pm., Santa's Grotto,  
Children's Crafts. Free, Enquiries 01634 855844.

November 27th – Upchurch Choral Society, Choral  
Classics, 7.30pm, St. Mary's Church, Upchurch,  
Tickets £6, refreshments, 01634 361897

November 27th – Friends of Bredhurst Cat Adoption  
Centre, Grand Christmas Crafts Bazaar, 11am –1pm,  
St Matthew's Community Centre, admission 30p

November 27th – Bredhurst's Got Talent, 7.30pm,  
Village Hall, Refreshments and Raffle Tickets £7.50  
adults, £3.50 children 01634 268544 or 07842

216116 Proceeds to St Peter's Church Roof Fund.

November 27th –Deanwood School Christmas Fayre,  
Long Catlis Road, Parkwood, 12noon – 3.00pm,  
Adults 50p, children 20p, Pre-school Free, All  
Welcome. More information from 01634 231901

November 27th – Barnardo's Christmas Evening,  
Callaway Hall, Millennium Centre, Rainham

Donations and gifts appreciated. Tickets £3.50,  
Children £1, Refreshments included. Book in  
advance , Ring 01634 233405 or 375486

November 27th – Gillingham Horticultural Society  
Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church,

Balmoral Road, Gillingham, Christmas Show.

Visitors welcome contact Kay Buss 01634 232998.

November 28th – Medway Towns Footpath Group,  
meet Shorne Wood Country Park (car park charge)  
10.00am, for an 8 mile fairly level, mainly tarmac or  
good paths, bring a snack lunch. No Dogs.

November 28th – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet  
Graham Jenkinson, 10.00am, Upnor public car park  
at far end (east) of Lower Upnor for a 6 mile walk ,  
no steep climbs some mostly quiet roads. Pub at end

November 29th – Rainham Wives, North Island New  
Zealand talk and slides with June & Alan Parkin  
(see 8th Nov).

November 29th – Parkwood Leisure Club (see 8th ).

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December 1st - Rainham Barnardo's Helpers Group  
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chance to buy those last minute gifts and cards, just  
£1.00 phone 01634 233405 or 375486.

December 1st - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm  
Cricket Pavilion, Berengrave Lane, AGM & Members  
Party, new members welcome ring 231972 for details.

December 2nd - Hempstead Leisure Club, Music for  
Health (see 11th Nov).

December 2nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Life at the  
Soup Kitchen - David Carter. (see 11th Nov).

December 2nd - Bredhurst Woodland Action Group  
(BWAG), Christmas Carol Concert, 7.30pm, St Peter's  
Church, Bredhurst, Tickets £6 per person from 07870  
878907 or 01634 233433.

December 4th - Friends of St. Margaret's, Lower Halstow,  
Christmas Craft and Produce Sale, 10.00am - 12.30 pm,  
refreshments available. Warm welcome guaranteed.

December 4th - Bryony School Christmas Fayre, St  
Matthew's Hall, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, 12 till 3pm.

December 4th & 5th - Christmas Open Studio at the Old  
Reed Bed Studios, 11.00am - 5.00pm each day, The  
Street, Lower Halstow, 01795 842481

December 5th - Friends of St Margaret's, Lower Halstow,  
Christmas Craft Activity Morning, 10.00 - 11.30am.

December 5th - Holywell Primary School Christmas  
Fayre, 2pm - 4 pm, Come and join in our festive fun

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December 5th - Tree Dressing, Riverside Country Park,  
11.00am - 12.30pm. Accompanied children 5 - 12  
years, No need to book, £1 per child.

December 5th - Medway Towns Footpath Group, meet  
Stephen Manning 01634 375821, 10.00am,  
Upchurch Golf Club 6 mile Christmas Dinner walk.  
No Dogs.

December 6th - The Monday "Hub" (see 8th Nov).

December 6th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Mr Endicott  
talk 'Police Museum' (see 8th Nov).

December 6th - Rainham Wives The Phoenix Singers  
(see 8th Nov).

December 7th - Gillingham Horticultural Society  
Floral Art Group, (see 16th Nov).

December 8th - Friends of Demelza inaugural group  
tea/coffee morning meeting. Anyone interested in  
attending please contact Laura, at Demelza on  
07717 731625, or Colin on 01634 234973

December 8th - Bredhurst WI, An Evening of  
Laughter - Mrs Marianne Martin. (see 10th Nov).

December 8th - Rainham Poetry Group, (see 10th).

December 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Friends of  
Gambian Schools - Paul Warren. (see 11th Nov).

December 10th - Gillingham and Rainham Local  
History Society, Mr. C. Jupp, History of the West  
Kent Regiment (see 12th Nov).

December 11th - Instep Dancing, Christmas Dance  
Ticket only, (see 13th Nov).

December 11th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 6th).

December 12th - Medway Towns Footpath Group,  
meet Stephen Manning 01634 375821 10.00am,  
Faversham park on the street Preston Lane /  
Catherine's Drive for a 6 mile 'Up the Creek' flat  
walk through Faversham. No Dogs.

December 14th - Medway Antique & Collector's  
Club, Christmas Dinner, (see 9th Nov).

December 17th - Wigmore MADS 'A Christmas  
Hamper' Christmas music and carols, 8.00pm, St  
Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive,  
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