

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■

JULY 2011

NUMBER 467



CAPSTONE FARMHOUSE, NEAR CHATHAM.

Capstone Farmhouse is one of the oldest houses in the Medway area. It is situated just opposite the main entrance to Capstone Country Park, and apart from some alterations to the windows the front view has probably changed little in appearance since the house was first built. But the young trees seen behind have now grown to hide the fields beyond.

The country park is a good place to spend a day with children - there's an extensive playground, a fishing lake with daily licences available, plenty of space to run and play games or fly kites, a café and toilets. Parking is FREE. An article about Capstone Farm begins on page 9.

Robert J. Kitney

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Editorial

Recently our accepted expectations for the weather have had to be considerably revised. The exceptionally cold and snowy weeks in December 2010 were unusual – we normally expect that sort of weather in January despite the annual parade of snow covered Christmas cards. But equally unsettling were the dry and warm if not positively hot weeks we enjoyed in the spring. I recorded less than three inches of rain for the whole of March, April and May combined. June now appears to be the 'new April' with frequent showers, some quite heavy, but interspersed with brilliantly sunny intervals. In the sunshine the ground dries rapidly so within a short while it as if the heavy downpour had never happened. At least the garden plants are appreciative of the showers and everything is growing at an alarming rate. Let us hope it is not too late for the orchards and arable crops and the farms are eventually able to gather a reasonable harvest.

There is an end of term feeling about our diary in this issue with many clubs and societies about to close for the traditional holiday month of August. However some activities continue particularly the walking groups who make the most of the long summer days by adding evening walks into their programmes. All the groups welcome new members so if you are normally too busy fitting in the jobs around your working life to join them on their morning weekend rambles, but keep intending to take more exercise, now would be a great opportunity to meet the groups, make new friends and walk off some calories. You never know you may enjoy it so much that in future you manage to create the time to regularly go out for a stroll.

Before the holidays begin we have details of many events taking place in July. These include Concerts, the Upchurch Festival of Music, Summer Fetes & Fairs, Produce Sales, Amateur Dramatic Productions, several activities in Bredhurst Woods organised by BWAG (Bredhurst Woodland Action Group), Cherry Day in Rochester, a reunion, a Quiz Night- in fact something for everyone.

Sorry about my senior moment last month removing ten years from the reign of the Queen. Thank you to those who kindly put me right. If you would like to enthuse our community to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee in style next year Dean Caston (01634 374183 e-mail caston.manor@btinternet.com) who organised events in Rainham in 2002 would love to hear from you. He has much experience as a volunteer with the

Rainham Theatrical Society at the Oast House Theatre and is willing to put this to good use organising local celebrations on this historic occasion in June 2012. Please do read on to discover all we have to offer for your entertainment in July, have a great month, we will be with you again in August.

Correspondence

MEMORIES OF RAINHAM

Dear Editor

A while ago I was visiting my brother in Gillingham when I read about the death of Freddie Cooper in your magazine. I read that he was a Governor of the Camp School in Maidstone Road from 1951 to 59. The mention of the school brought back memories of when I was a pupil from 1948 - 53.

At that time I lived in a prefab at 5 Dobson Ave, which was about a 10 minute walk to the school. The school was originally an army camp and then used as a school. I remember the Head Master, Mr Rivers, who was a very hot on discipline not a trend today in some schools. There was a deep water hole at the entrance to the school which was well fenced off (never saw it used for anything, the water may have been used for any local fires). The school was close to a farm field, in fact the field was at the back of our prefab. One year the farmer's hayrick was set alight and we were all marched in to assembly to find out if the culprit was at the school. If they were they did not own up. The smell of burnt hay didn't leave the school area for ages. I remember the first year at school we had to perform in front of our parents a nonsense poem which I cannot remember the title. I had the part of a fat butcher about a pig and the lines went like this: Butcher. 'Where are you going my fine young pig?' Pig. 'I'm going to London to buy a new wig' Butcher. 'A pig in a wig, a pig in a wig whoever before saw a pig in a wig.' I was five at the time and remember I had to put on lipstick, eh!

When the Hungarian revolution was going on we were moved to Goudhurst Rd, on the Twydall Estate and the refugees were put in the prefabs. We lived next to where the Royal Engineer pub is now. The pub and the shops on the pub side were not built, at that time, it was only waste ground.

There were a lot of people who wanted a community centre and I remember that's how the Twydall Community Centre in Beechings Way came into existence. As I recall it was Mr and Mrs Day, who lived in Goudhurst Rd, who were the main pioneers of the project. There were many helpers and lots of fund raising. For instance every week for many years a volunteer would go round the estate collecting donations for the building, the donations would be 3d (old money). Soon a news sheet was produced which printed up-to-date news of the progress of the building fund etc. Once a year there was a Miss Twydall competition and a dance which was held at the

Franklyn rooms and of course raffles etc. I moved away from the estate before the centre was built. I know it took several years and a lot of hard work in the organising and the collecting of funds and seeing the local council for planning permission etc but I can see it was well worth it.

Yours truly,
Michael Whitehead
88 Fitzwilliam Ave
Wath upon Dearne
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S63 7HW

RAINHAM POETRY GROUP

Dear Editor,

Mr Rehman Chishti, M.P. invited Terry Godwin of the Rainham Poetry Group to lunch at the Houses of Parliament thanking them for their steadfast promotion of poetry in the Medway Towns in the five years since they have been formed also for their support of the Sunlight Centre in their Radio Room.

Due to their increased activities the group have decided to change their name to the Medway Poetry Group as most of their members live out of Rainham and their monthly meeting in the Radio Room is called the Medway Hour of Poetry.

The Group have now made strong contacts with Poetry Connect on the Internet who have shown strong interest in working together to promote poetry internationally.

Rehman Chishti has agreed to become a patron of the new Medway Poetry Group.

Yours sincerely
Terry Godwin
40 Birling Avenue
01634 260228

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Dear Editor,

I read with interest your article in the June edition of Action Forum about decorations for the Royal Wedding and how we have celebrated other royal events or may celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of HM The Queen in 2012.

I organised a series of events in Rainham for the Golden Jubilee in 2002 which included a pageant through Rainham featuring a selection of vehicles from the past 50 years, Gillingham Marching Band and a Majorette troupe as well as a concert in

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St Margaret's Church performed by The Rainham Theatrical Society.

I would be interested to hear from your readers if there would be any interest in a similar event to mark the Diamond Jubilee next June and also from any organisations/individuals who would like to help Rainham lead the way in the celebrations. Please contact me on 01634 374183 or e-mail me at caston.manor@btinternet.com

Yours sincerely
Dean Caston

TAI CHI CLASS

St Margaret's Millennium Centre are hoping to run a Tai Chi class on Tuesday afternoons and maybe an evening class on a Thursday from August. If you are interested please ring the office on 01634 374038 between 9.00am -12.30pm or leave a message, with contact details, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

'SOMETHING TO REMEMBER YOU BY'

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UPCHURCH FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

The Thirteenth Biennial Upchurch Festival of Music will take place between 5th and 10th July. See the Diary or contact 01634 361508 or 361557 for details.

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Diary 2011

No charge is made for Diary entries

Copy should be in writing either by email to

af@thenet.uk.net or

5, Meresborough Cottages, Meresborough,
Gillingham, Kent ME8

Diary Copy Date: 19th July

July 2nd & 3rd - Open Studios at the Old Reed Bed, The
Street, Lower Halstow, 01795 842481 12noon - 6.00pm

July 3rd - Kent Wildlife Trust, Queendown Warren
Nature Reserve, Open Day, Free Entry, 11.00am -
4.30pm, Sheepdog Exhibition 12 noon & 2.00pm,
Guided walks, Children's Activities, Dogs welcome on
leads, Information from Tyland Barn 01622 662012 or
visit www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

July 4th - The Monday Hub, St Paul's Church,
Deanwood Drive, Parkwood 10.00am - 1.00pm, lively
conversation, table tennis, scrabble and much more,
details Jennie Spalding 01634 360664.

July 4th - Rainham Wives meet 8.00pm Methodist
Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham, Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People, talk by Paul Ledger plus Yorick. 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.

July 5th - Fairview Frogs parent/carer and toddler group,
every Tuesday in term time, 10.00 - 11.30am Fairview
Community Primary School. Messy and fun activities
ring 01634 338710 or 376270 for details.

July 5th - Gillingham Horticultural Society Floral Art
Group, 7.30 - 9.00pm United Reformed Church (rear
hall), Balmoral Road, Gillingham, Basic shapes and
mechanics workshop wit Carol Goodwin. Visitors
welcome contact Kay Buss 01634 232998

July 5th - Upchurch Festival of Music, Bearsted Choral
Society, Tickets and further details, 01634 361508

July 6th - Upchurch Festival of Music, The Brook
Orchestra, 01634 361508

July 6th - Rainham Horticultural Society, Growing
Delphiniums - Carolyn Clarke, 7.30 pm, Cricket
Pavilion, Berengrave Lane, Rainham. New members
welcome, ring 366276 for details.

July 7th - Fairview Tadpoles parent/carer baby and
toddler group, every Thursday in term time, 1.15 -
2.45pm Fairview Community Primary School. Meet

other mums for a chat and drink ring 01634 338710 or
376270 for details, Toddlers now welcome.

July 7th - Wigmore Thursday Club, The Battle of Monte
Cassino - Derek Flippance, Royal Engineers Museum,
St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive,
Wigmore, 2.00pm. For people over the age of 50, ring
235507 for details.

July 7th - Hempstead Leisure Club. - Wilf Lower -
Billowing Sails. Hempstead Village Hall, behind All
Saints Church, 169 Hempstead Road, 2.00 - 4.00pm.
New members welcome Phone 01634 366907

July 7th - Upchurch Festival of Music, Opus 32, 361508
July 8th - Upchurch Festival of Music, Burt Butler's
Jazz Pilgrims, 01634 361508

July 8th - 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
01634 364309 for details.

July 8th - MKAS, Martin Morgan Taylor -
Astronomical Alignments of Maltese Temples or
observatories, Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood
Road second and last Friday in the month, 7.45pm.
For observing we meet on other Fridays at the
Victoria Hotel, Canterbury. More details phone Trev
on 07717 678795 or <http://www.midkentastro.org.uk/>

July 8th - "HARMONY" - Female vocal harmony
group - supporting HANDS & Gillingham Volunteer
Centre, 7.30pm Millennium Centre, Rainham,
Ploughman's supper - bring your own drinks, Tickets
£8 from 01634 362119 (Hands)

July 8th & 9th - St Paul's Drama Group 'When we are
Married' by J. B. Priestly Community Hall, Third
Avenue, Gill, 7.30pm Adults £6, Cons £5 01634
852712

July 9th - Meredale Independent School, Soloman
Road, Rainham, Annual Summer Fete, 12noon -
3.00pm. 01634 233763 michellehextall@gmail.com

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July 9th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 9.30am, 17 miles,
meet Geoff Ettridge 7526 161766 in front of The
George Inn, Newnham. During the day making our
way between 5 PH - some which we may need to
visit! Bring sufficient food for two snack breaks, Pub
midway and at end, finish between 5 & 6pm.

July 9th - Summer Fair, Friends of the Wisdom Hospice.
10.00am - 2.00pm, 50p adults Children free.

July 9th - Ladies Art Group meet at the Riverside
Country Park Rainham every Saturday morning to
paint in watercolour 10.0am to 1.0pm. Small, friendly
group of beginners and more experienced painters
details from Barbara on 01634 235733 or e-mail
barbara.trige@sky.com.

July 9th - Music Quiz Night Parkwood Infants
School, 7.30pm £5 per head teams 6 - 8, contact
07860 473375 or Louise.webb3@btinternet.net

July 9th - Upchurch Festival of Music, City of
Canterbury Brass Band, Tickets 01634 361508

July 9th - Family Cherry Day 1.00 - 4.00pm The Vines
Park, Crow Lane, Rochester. All welcome, free entry,
fundraising for Macmillan Cancer Care Unit at
Medway Maritime Hospital. Restoration House open
[entrance fee payable]

July 9th - Quiz Night, Chatham Grammar Association,
School Hall, Rainham Road, Chatham, 7.30pm,
Tickets £4 pp (£2 still at school) 01795 479390.

July 9th & 10th - Capstone Farm Country Park, Survival
Challenge, 10.30am - 10.00am next day, camp out in
the woods, cook your food over a campfire, learn
traditional skills, for accompanied children aged 7
plus, £20 pp (includes breakfast), book 01643 338191.

July 9th & 10th - Fort Amherst, Dock Road, Chatham,
Napoleonic Re-enactors, 10.30am to 4.30pm. Adults
£2 Children £1, Limited Free Parking 01634 847747

July 10th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 5.5 miles,
meet Tony/Ann Faulkner 01634 406634 Charing Rail
Station (parking charges apply) Bring picnic Pub with
lunches available at end

July 10th - Upchurch Festival of Music, Upchurch Night
(Upchurch Choral Society, Holywell School and local
talent), Tickets and further details, 01634 361508

July 10th - Concert, 5.00pm, St Mary The Virgin
Church, Newington - Chamber Music - Tickets £7.00
to include refreshments, Contact 01795 842478

July 11th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group for
those still in employment, Millennium Centre,

Rainham, 7.15 - 9.00pm to help people who have lost
their spouse or a close relative, join us for a cuppa and
chat, ring Julie 01634 364309 for details.

July 11th - Rainham Wives, Summer Meal (see 4th July
July 12th - Medway Antique & Collector's Club, 7.30
for 8.00pm, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham,
Members' evening, Visitors most welcome, ring
01474 823606 for details.

July 13th - FAME (Family and Associates of Medway
Evacuees) Millennium Centre, Rainham, 2.00pm
start. For details contact s_evans5@blueyonder.co.uk

July 13th - RSPB North Kent Marshes, Gentle Harry's
Farm - an open air production by the Rude
Mechanical Theatre Company at RSPB Northward
Hill, Bromhey Farm Cooling, 6pm for picnics,

Performance 7.30pm Tickets £12, 01323 501260
Book online www.therudemmechanicaltheatre.co.uk

July 13th - Riverside Country Park, Junior Ranger Club,
3.45pm - 4.45pm. For accompanied children aged 5
to 12-years-old. Book 01634 337432. £1 per child.

July 13th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 7.00pm, 4 miles,
meet Bob/ Maureen Bassett 01634 578721 Luton
Recreational playing fields, Pub at end.

July 13th - Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm, Upchurch
Village Hall, Demonstration by Steven McDonald
'Just for Fun', for more information ring 01795
425700 or see www.rainhamflowerclub.ik.com

July 13th - Rainham Poetry Group meet second
Wednesday each month, 40 Birling Avenue Rainham,
7.30 - 9.30pm. All are welcome to listen or read
poetry, ring 01634 260228 for details.

July 13th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Bredhurst Village
Hall, Mr Donald Ball - History of London Coffee
Houses, ring 01634 389966 for more details.

July 14th - 3rd Parkwood Brownies 40th birthday, 5.30
- 7.30pm, St Paul's Church, Parkwood. All former
Brownies, leaders and their families invited. Details
374302 or carol.wigmore@blueyonder.co.uk

July 14th - Hempstead Leisure Club - Games, tea &
chat, (see 7th July).

July 14th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Entertainment by
Kingfisher Singers, (see 7th July).

July 14th - Medway Film Makers, 7.30pm, Davis Estate
Community Centre - Filming a wedding - led by
Peter Hughes, ring 01634 360401 or see
www.medwayfilmmakers.com for details.

Continued on Page 11

K. Gillard

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"HARMONY"
 Female Vocal Harmony Group
 Supporting HANDS & Gillingham Volunteer Centre
 Friday 8th July, doors open at 7.00 for
 7.30pm Millennium Centre, Rainham
 Ploughman's supper — bring your own drinks,
 Tickets £8 available from John or Sophie 01634
 362119 (Hands) and Wendy 07816 159668
 Brenda 07788 998443 (Harmony).

MUSIC QUIZ NIGHT
 Saturday 9th July 7.00 for 7.30pm
 Parkwood Infants School, £5 each, Teams of 6 – 8
 Bar & snacks available, you are welcome to bring
 your own food. Prize for the winning team
 Please contact Louise 07860 473375 or email
Louise.webb3@btinternet for information or tickets.

ANNUAL SUMMER FETE
 Meredale Independent School, Soloman Road,
 Rainham Saturday 9th July, 12noon – 3.00pm.
 For more details call 01634 233763 or email
michellehextall@gmail.com

BWAG Bredhurst Woodland Action Group
 Volunteer Task Day Sun 17th July, 10am – 2pm
 Bats of Bredhurst Friday 22nd July, 8pm till dark
 Wildflower Walk Saturday 23rd July, 11am – 1pm
 07813 785940/ bwag@vanessajones.plus.com for
 details and to reserve your place.

FORT PITT
 Fort Pitt Old Girls Association Annual Reunion
 Saturday 9th July 2.00 – 6.00pm at the school. For
 details see website www.fpoga.btck.co.uk or
 telephone 01795 599378.

BARNARDO'S SUMMER GARDEN PARTY
 Saturday 23rd July, 2.00 – 4.00pm
 4 Broadview Avenue, Rainham
 Admission £3 includes tea.
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QUIZ NIGHT
 Chatham Grammar Association
 School Hall, Rainham Road, Chatham
 Saturday 9th July, 7.30pm.£4 pp (£2 still at school)
 Bring your own nibbles and drinks.
 Tables for 6, we are quite happy to find
 singletons a team - Everyone is welcome.
 To book please contact Sue 01795 479390

CONCERT
 Sunday 10th July, 5.00pm
 St Mary The Virgin Church, Newington
 Chamber Music performed by
 The Atticus Ensemble to include Schubert -
 Quartettsatz D 703, Albinoni – Oboe concerto Op 9
 No2 and Vaughan Williams - The Lark Ascending
 Tickets £7.00 include refreshments
 Contact David Lane 01795 842478

PRODUCE SALE
 St.Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow
 Saturday 16th July, 10.00am to 1.00pm
 Refreshments available

ANNUAL SUMMER SHOW
 Gillingham Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society
 Silver Jubilee 25th Anniversary
 Saturday 30th July, 2.00pm,
 Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way
 Entry £1, Children free.
 Meet Andy Garland of Radio Kent Fame.
 Contact E. Searle 01634 852519

JUNIOR GHOST TOURS
 Fort Amherst
 Dock Road, Chatham
 Wednesday 27th July, Gates Open 6.40pm
 Tour 7.00pm All Tickets £6
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR JUNE

This month's Nature Notes are based on a visit to Eynsford and Lullingstone, both situated on the banks of the River Darent. The river rises in the Greensand Hills above Sevenoaks and empties into the Thames below Dartford. The Darent Valley was the inspiration for Samuel Palmer, a 19th century artist who founded an artists' colony in Shoreham, surrounded by hop gardens, orchards, water meadows and woods. His dreamy paintings show a rich pastoral landscape framed by the chalk hills of the North Downs.

We drove down the A20 towards London, turned left at the Farningham by-pass and headed for Eynsford. Photographs of the ford and mediaeval bridge at Eynsford can often be seen in picture books and on calendars. The Darent, wide and shallow near the ford, had attracted a number of children, some of whom were probing the water with fishing nets and others merely paddling.

We enquired of two children with nets what they had caught. We were shown their plastic buckets in which were minnows, fresh water shrimps, water lice, a common fish leech (olive green) and various unidentified "mini beasts", including what appeared to be insect larvae. Swallows were hawking for flies above the river and so it would seem that some of these larvae had metamorphosed into insects.

We then visited the remains of the Roman villa at Lullingstone, near which we had a stroll along a stretch of the River Darent. In or on the banks of the river were water crowfoot (long streams of white flowers), fool's watercress, lesser water parsnip, meadow sweet (creamy white flowers) and purple loosestrife. Chubb, water voles, grey wagtails and kingfishers inhabit the river but I have to say that we saw none of these. We did however come across banded demoiselle dragonflies with their distinctive dark blue bands.

After a snack in the KCC Visitor Centre on Castle Road, we walked to Lullingstone Castle, a 15th century manor house. Here the son of the Hart Dyke family has created a "World Garden of Plants". The garden is set out in the form of a map of the main

countries of the world. Great Britain's plot contains, among other plants, primroses representing England, heather for Scotland and (bright orange coloured) Welsh poppies.

The long border on both sides of the entrance to the World Garden was a mass of flowers in June but the plant that seemed to be attracting the most insects - bees, flies, beetles and hover flies - was the Shrubby Hare's Ear, an unexciting plant which is easily overlooked. It is an evergreen, bushy shrub with rounded heads of very small, yellow flowers. House martin's nests adorned the facade and courtyard of the manor house, as well as the porch of the family church of St Botolph. There was a cluster of four nests on the facade which were joined together, the most that I have ever seen. The birds themselves are black and white in colour and are a great delight to watch. I am sure that the Hart Dykes are very pleased to see the martins on their arrival in April and sad to see them depart in September.

We ended our visit to the Darent Valley at nearby Castle Farm which has diversified in order to survive. It produces beef cattle, PYO apples, lavender, dried flowers, hops and arable crops. The farm shop ("The Hop Shop") has been voted "Best Shop in Kent". On our arrival cattle were standing in the cool waters of the Darent and under the shade of some alder trees, chewing the cud and swotting flies with their tails. The scene was reminiscent of photographs (in black and white) that used to appear in Country Life picture books in the 1930s.

Next to the half timbered farmhouse was a vegetable garden with raised beds, a small apple orchard and some soft fruit bushes. Standing among the latter was a scarecrow draped in a lady's dress and with a lady's straw hat on its (or should it be "her") head. On the opposite side of the lane to the farmhouse a pair of pied wagtails were feeding an apparently growing family of young in a nest under the guttering of a large shed.

Tours can be undertaken of the lavender fields from mid June to early August, when they buzz with the sounds of bumble and honey bees. Unfortunately, we ourselves arrived at the farm at the wrong time. Clearly there is no need to follow Peter Mayle (the

author of "A Year in Provence") to the lavender fields of the South of France. The colour and the scent of the aromatic plant can be experienced here in the Darent Valley

Joe Ennis

CAPSTONE FARM

Capstone Farmhouse dates from the mid-fifteenth century. Originally it had a recessed central hall with a two-storey chamber at one end and a service range at the other. During the sixteenth century a central chimney stack and an upper floor to the hall were inserted, and the service range was rebuilt in about 1800. Further alterations have taken place during the last hundred years but the front view has changed little over the centuries.

In the early part of the twentieth century the owner of the farm was Henry Gurr, a butcher who used part of the land to fatten sheep and cows for his shop. In 1928 the whole farm was put up for sale, and the farmhouse was described as a 'picturesque old-fashioned house, at present occupied by the bailiff, of brick, half-timber and tiled construction'. The kingpost in the attic was specifically mentioned.

It seems that over the next few years the house and outbuildings generally were somewhat neglected (the thirties were not good years for farmers or for many others). In October 1937 the farm was bought by Chatham Borough Council as a site for mixed development, naming housing, open spaces, allotments and education as possible uses. There were strong objections, however, from the Chatham and District Water Company, whose works and pumping station were immediately below the site in Capstone Road, on the grounds of possible pollution.

Meanwhile Capstone Farm was leased for three years to Mr Cecil Wright of Stockbury, who kept on Mr Gurr's bailiff, G.E. Whyman, as Farm Manager. One room of the farmhouse was used as his office, but in July 1938 the Council made a demolition order on the building, pointing out that it was 'suitable for present needs, but if re-let would probably require considerable repair'. Four other cottages on the farm were also scheduled for demolition, and five new houses were to be erected along Capstone Road with priority given to agricultural workers as tenants. But the war intervened. Mr Wright's tenancy ended in September 1939, and no-one else was keen on taking over (the rent was to be £400 per annum) despite

widespread advertising on the Council's part. So they decided to farm it themselves, setting up the 'Capstone Farm Management Committee' for the purpose. Mr Whyman agreed to carry on as Manager 'on the same terms that I had with Mr Gurr'. These he set out in a letter from the farmhouse dated 4th November 1939: £3 per week, my rent, the use of a cow, coal, and a man occasionally to do my garden as I do not have the time to do it myself. Also a bonus at the end of each farm year.' The Committee jibbed at the cow, and he eventually had to pay for this himself. The following January Mr Whyman had permission to hire his son Ken at a wage of £2. 5s 0d. per week. Minutes of the Farm Management Committee from the 1940s indicate the type of farming carried out, the crops grown, and the concerns affecting Capstone Farm. The farm stock had all been put up for sale in early October 1939 by Mr Wright when his tenancy ended, and from the sale catalogue we learn that there were forty pigs, ninety ewes and fifty lambs, a Sussex bull and six heifers, and six assorted horses - 'three carthorses, vanner and two nags'. No fewer than seven ploughs, together with harrows, drills and carts, but no tractor.

In total the farm extended to 267 acres, of which just over half was arable land. Much of this was used to grow corn and potatoes, but just after the war the bailiff was required to supply turnips, swedes and cabbages as well as potatoes for Chatham's Civic Restaurant. Drought was a problem in 1949, but nevertheless in September the Farm Manager was congratulated on the 'excellent manner in which he obtained the cooperation of his employees in harvesting the crops', which apparently were some of the best ever grown at Capstone. Twenty acres of barley yielded grain good enough for malting, while that from a further thirteen acres, of slightly lesser quality, was sold to the Ministry of Food. Ken Whyman had succeeded his father as Farm Manager and Bailiff in 1945.

To be continued.

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July 14.15.16.21.22.23rd - 'Something to Remember You By' A Jimmy Chinn, Oasthouse Theatre, Rainham Curtain up 8pm. Box Office 0844 8793224
July 16th – St Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow, Produce Sale, 10.00am -1.00pm, refreshments
July 16th – Instep Dancing, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, Ballroom, Latin, Sequence dancing 8.00 - 11.00pm. Enquiries 01634 363738 email s.collins02@btinternet.com
July 17th – Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 7.2 miles, meet Arthur/Jan Waters 01634 711734 Meopham Green Bring picnic lunch. Pub with lunches at end
July 17th – Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 12.5 miles, meet Mike Collins 01634 364818 near White Hart PH Cuxton. Bring picnic for midday. Pub at end.
July 17th – Berengrave Guided Walk, 10.00am – 12noon, not suitable for those with walking difficulties, may be muddy, £1 per person, book in advance 01634 337432.
July 17th – Volunteer Task Day, Bredhurst Woodland Action Group 10.00am – 2.00pm Meet Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst, details please call Steve Wright on 07801 386264 or Email stevewright50@btinternet.com
July 18th – The Monday Hub, (see 4th July).
July 18th – Rainham Evening Women's Institute, 7.30pm, Millennium Centre, Hoping for a Few Laughs – Dorothy Grey, comp Leather, 372282 for details.
July 18th – Wigmore WI, 7.30pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Steve Pendleton – Blinded on duty, Visitors welcome ring 01634 263405
July 19th – Gillingham Horticultural Society Floral Art Group, 7.30 – 9.00pm United Reformed Church (rear hall), Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 'Show the Inner You' a modern/freestyle arrangement. Visitors welcome contact Kay Buss 01634 232998
July 19th – RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Strood Library, 7.45 – 10.00 £3.00. Spring adventures in Taiwan, - Adam Rowlands

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July 19th – Medway Ramblers Walk, 7.00pm, 4.5 miles, meet Tony/Ann Faulkner 01634 406634 Recreation Ground off Priestfields Rochester Bring binoculars & water if hot Should end by 9.30pm
July 20th – Capstone Farm Country Park, Tiny Tots, 10.00am – 1.00pm, arts and crafts for younger children, suitable for accompanied 2-5 years, please wear old clothes, £1 per child, drop in any time.
July 20th – Bredhurst Garden Club, Carolyn Clarke Illustrated Talk 'Delphiniums', 7.30pm, Village Hall, 01634 233554, new members welcome.
July 21st – Hempstead Leisure Club – In My Liverpool House – George Wildridge, (see 7th July)
July 21st – Wigmore Thursday Club, A Year in Parliament – Rehman Chishti, MP, (see 7th July).
July 21st – Rainham Women Institute 1.45 – 4.00pm Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Speaker on Kent's weirdest place. Visitors welcome for small entry charge per visit, ring 01634 36627
July 22nd – Bats of Bredhurst, (every Friday through the season) Bredhurst Woodland Action Group, 8.00pm till dark Meet Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst, free but places limited booking essential, contact 07813 785940 bwag@vanessajones.plus.com
July 23rd – Wildflower Walk, Bredhurst Woodland Action Group 11.00am – 1.00pm Meet Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst, free booking essential - contact 07813 785940 bwag@vanessajones.plus.com
July 23rd – Barnardo's Summer Garden Party, 2.00 – 4.00pm, 4 Broadview Avenue, Rainham, Admission £3 includes delicious cake or strawberry tea. Phone 01634 233405 or 375486
July 23rd – Ramases, Newington Village Hall, 2.30pm, Dr Jocelyn Gohary: 'New light on Akehenaten at Karnak', Tickets £8 on the door on the day, for more information contact John Dewey 01795 472316 ramasesnk@hotmail.com
July 24th – Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 5 miles, meet Simon Ellwood Chatham Dockyard Outlet Centre (the Bell Mast in Leviathan Way) Pub at end.

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July 24th - Capstone Farm Country Park, Mountain Bike
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July 26th - Capstone Farm Country Park, Orienteering
Family Fun, 10.00am - 2.00pm, test your skills around
the trail, suitable for groups, families and individuals £1
per person, book in advance 01634 338191.

July 28th - Capstone Farm Country Park, Parent and
Child Fishing Teaching, 9.00am - 12noon, learn the
basics of course fishing, all equipment and bait
supplied, suitable for age 8 - 12 years. £8 per child,
book in advance 01643 338191.

July 28th - Hempstead Leisure Club - Summer Lunch,
(see 7th July).

July 28th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, Howard Hall, Woodside 7.30pm,
ring 01634 312038 for details.

July 28th - Medway Film Makers, Meet WALLDO again
and brush up on those techniques with John Hooker,
(see 14th July).

July 29th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 4.5 miles,
meet Peter/Ann Green 01634 718895 village hall in
Hodsoll Street (near Green Man PH). Pub at end

July 29th - MKAS, Nigel Bradbury - The Northern Lights
Experience, (see 8th July)

July 30th - Riverside Country Park, Mini Beast Hunt, 10-
12 noon. For accompanied children aged 5 to 12-years-
old, Book in advance on 01634 337432, £1 per child.

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July 30th - Gillingham & District Fuchsia &
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Contact E. Searle 01634 852519

July 31st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 6 miles,
meet Marian Gilham 01795 661474 at the Kiosk on
the Shellness Road beyond Leysdown Bring
binoculars and snack for midway break.

August 3rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 4.5
miles Meet Peter/Ann Green 01634 718895 the end
of Lodge Lane, Cobham. Pub with lunches available
at end or visit the Friary.

August 3rd - Rainham Horticultural Society,
Competition Night, 7.30 pm, Cricket Pavilion,
Berengrave Lane, New members welcome, 366276

August 4th - Capstone Farm Country Park, Parent and
Child Fishing Teaching, (see 28th July).

August 4th - Riverside Country Park, Creative Clay
Creatures, 10am - 12noon. For accompanied children
aged 5 to 12 Book 01634 337432. £1 per child.

August 7th - Walking with Giants - Guided Tree Walk,
Bredhurst Woodland Action Group 10am - 1pm
Meet Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst, free but places
limited booking essential - contact Vanessa Jones on
07813 785940/ bwag@vanessajones.plus.com

August 7th - Capstone Farm Country Park, Trim Trail,
8.45 - 9.30am, £1 per person book 01634 338191

August 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 6
miles Meet Geoff Ettridge 7526 161766 in front of St
Margaret's Church High Halstow. Mainly flat but we
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