

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■

MAY 2012

NUMBER 476



Rainham decorated and celebrated in style for the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary on June 23rd 1911. Banners, such as this one across Station Road by the Railway Inn (looking across the line before the footbridge was built) displayed patriotic slogans, possibly more wishful thinking than expectation as only three years later we were at war with Germany. See inside for some events arranged in this area to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee and an article about Rainham Station footbridge on page 9

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Editorial

We should have known – as soon as an official drought was declared and a hose pipe ban introduced it started to rain! If only we could have had this weather during the winter it would have done so much more good for farmers, gardeners and the morale of the country. Having a warm sunny March was great at the time but that has long been forgotten when the persistent series of damp miserable days that was April followed. Let us hope that the see saw continues and May arrives with at least some warmth and sunshine to encourage us with preparations for the Jubilee weekend.

I recently came across an Official Programme of the Coronation Celebrations in Rainham in 1953. A committee of well known local people must have worked tirelessly for months beforehand organising an impressive calendar of events. This began on Wednesday 27th May with an evening Carnival of decorated floats and walking entrants starting at 7.00pm from Broadview Avenue via Maidstone Road, the High Street, Ivy Street, Solomon Road, Sunderland Square and Station Road to the Recreation Ground followed by presentation of the prizes and dancing. On Sunday 31st May two special Coronation Services were held, one a United Youth Service at Orchard Street School and another in church in the evening. Coronation Day started with an 8.00am service in church and continued at 2.30pm. Between these times we all squeezed into the homes of the few with television sets to watch the ceremony live from Westminster Abbey before our eyes (if you could manage to get a glimpse of the very small screen in the crush). The planned programme of events then continued with the R.E Cadet Band, Peter Pan Starlets, A London Mime Theatre, Tug of War, Bat and Trap, Sheep Dog Demonstrations, Comic Football Match, Maypole Dancing, The Feuding Dudes (Hill-Billy songs and dances) and Girl Guides marching display. Throughout the early evening Children's Races were planned with cash prizes varying from 2/6d for the 80 yards girls flat race for 5 and 6 year olds to ten shillings for the 15 -16 year old boys one mile race. Twelve and a half to fifty pence were good prizes in then. Unfortunately as many will remember June 2nd 1953 was a day much like those we have just had in April - an almost complete wash out and many of the events had to be postponed or cancelled.

I hope the events being planned for this year's Jubilee celebrations do not suffer a similar fate. They include special concerts, craft fairs and fetes, church services, a Mad Hatters Tea Party and Big Lunch gatherings (read on to find out more in our pages this month). The idea of the Big Lunch started last year when we had an extra Royal Wedding Bank Holiday. We all lead such busy lives that few of us know any but our immediate next door neighbours. To encourage a more traditional friendly attitude everyone in a street/close/area is asked on this day to bring a picnic lunch to a central spot to share and eat together and get to know each other. There is still time to plan something in your road if you have not already done so – be brave – knock on your neighbours door and suggest it! However you plan to spend the month do enjoy any good days we happen to have and make the most of the sunshine until we see you again in June.

Correspondence

MISS HYDE

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the photo of Miss Hyde with Bredhurst School in April Action Forum.

My father Mr Harry Pye gave a vane to St Peter's Church in memory of her.

Yours sincerely
Veronica Pye
Abbey Court Farm
Lidsing ME7 3NL

BRATS

Dear Editor,

May I say how grateful I am to the BRATS, not as described in the dictionary but a local group, the Bredhurst Receiving and Transmitting Society, who took upon themselves the duty of explaining and easing the mind of the local community regarding the upcoming change over from analogue to digital.

Well done to the Club for a real community spirited effort. Their strongest message, apart from lots of helpful advice, was do not be over concerned, panicked or over charged in respect of the changeover. They may be 'HAMS' but there was nothing hammy about their presentation. If you are interested in radio transmitting and receiving - this would be the club to join. My sincere thanks to all concerned at 'BRATS'.

Regards
Mrs Marilyn Murray
Rainham

CELEBRATIONS

Dear Editor,

This is going to be an historic year with the Olympics, and the Queens Diamond Jubilee. I remember when we celebrated the Queens Golden Jubilee in Rainham with a parade through the streets which was heroically organised by Dean Caston of the R.A.T.S. Such great fun for all of us who participated and for all who watched the parade pass by. It

inspired such a great sense of community. I am sorry to hear that no-one has been inspired by Deans shining example and planned something like this.

We, at The Centre, Farthing Corner, are holding a Mad Hatters Tea Party on Sunday 3rd June starting at 12.00pm. There will be lots of good old fashioned family fun and games, races, quizzes, and of course a tea party with teapots of every shape and size for your drinks. This is for all ages, families and people who will be spending this very long weekend on their own. Sadly we are limited for space so we must ticket this event. £2.00 will not only give you entry but will enter you into our super raffle so book early. We are asking people to bring some food and/or drink to share and wear mad hats or fancy dress if you wish. If you would like to help us with this special day we would be delighted to hear from you.

We will give all children certificates so in future years they will remember what they did on the Queens Diamond Jubilee.

Yours sincerely
Jane Marvell
Phone 01634 376507

ST MARGARET'S C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL

Dear Editor

The Governing Body of St Margaret's C of E Junior School would like to thank all those people who responded to the consultation on our proposal to change the timings of the school day. Having considered the arguments for and against a change, the Governing Body has decided to leave the times of the start and end of the school day as there are, which are 8.55am and 3.30pm respectively.

Yours Sincerely
Joe Ennis

A Governor of St Margaret's C of E Junior School

MESSY CHURCH

Dear Editor,

St. Margaret's Church will be hosting "Messy Church" on Saturday May 5th and June 2nd then the first Saturday in every month. The venue will be the Millennium Centre starting 10.30am. Everyone, young and old, is welcome to come and join in the fun. Bring and share picnic lunch.

Yours sincerely,
Ann Critchley
01634 379976

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THAMES ESTUARY AIRPORT

Dear Editor

I was extremely disappointed to read Diane Parmenter's letter (AF April 2012) deploring the proposals for a Thames Estuary airport. Her negative views mirror those of Medway Council in not wanting anything to be done to bring life and energy into the falling and failing fortunes of the Medway Towns.

For approaching 60 years now, the once vigorous and economical strengths of our Medway towns have slowly drained away. Employer after employer have either shut up shop and moved away or closed down forever. Great names from the past spring to mind: Short's Brothers, Winget's, Gyproc, BP, Chatham Dockyard and the Armed Forces from the local garrison. Their loss has meant the decline and fall of our town centre prosperity and the general malaise hanging over our local population in general. The creations of Gillingham Business Park and Rochester City Estate helped to stem the downturn but what all North Kent needs is something big enough to really change matters.

The Thames Estuary airport is just the project that can provide this. In terms of construction then of daily running, many jobs will be created providing lasting employment and prosperity. New infrastructure by way of rail and road links will keep everything moving. Only relatively few people will face disruption and the birds that use the marshes for nesting, etc, will still have plenty of coastline marshes available in the rest of Kent and Essex. At Gatwick it is known that birds can live and breed alongside the runway. There is little or nothing to fear, only the prospect of great benefit to everybody. Even our town centres may come back to life.

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Diary 2012

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 8PP

Diary Copy Date: 15th May

May 5th - St. Margaret's Church "Messy Church" first
Saturday every month. Millennium Centre, 10.30am
Everyone, young and old, welcome. Bring and share
picnic lunch. Details 01634 379976

May 5th - St Mary's Church, Newington, Some
Enchanted Evening with Cameo Opera, Tickets £10,
Contact David Lane 01795 842478

May 5-7th - Sweeps Festival, Castle Gardens and The
Vines, Rochester, 10.00am - 5.00pm, Live music and
family activities. See www.whatsonmedway.co.uk

May 6th - Medway Ramblers Walks Meet Mike Murr,
10.00am for 4.5 miles at Wouldham Recreation Ground
car park, Knowle Road, Pubs at end with lunches.

May 6th - Medway Ramblers Walks Meet Beryl Murr,
10.00am for 11 miles figure of 8 walk at Egerton car
park. Bring picnic lunch.

May 6th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group walk, meet
Kevin Nicholas 075153 30276 10.00am, 5 miles at
Nonington Trees of Fredville Park, part of the miner's
Way Trail. Dogs OK

May 6th - Sunday Service with guest medium Sheila
Appleton, £1.00, 6.30 - 8.30pm Healing after the
service at The Centre mind.body.spirit, M2 services
next to Travelodge, 01634 366944 www.thecentre-mindbodyspirit.co.uk

May 8th - Medway Antique and Collectors' Club, Antique
Sauce Boats St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham,
7.30 for 8.00pm all visitors most welcome. Enquiries
Miss E Boyes 0147 482 3606

May 8th - Every Tuesday evening Healing freely given
7.30 - 9.00pm at The Centre (see 6th May).

May 9th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Bredhurst Village Hall,
Annual Meeting - Silent Auction, ring 01634 389966.

May 9th - Rainham Flower Club, Upchurch Village Hall,
7.30pm, Demonstration by Alan Smith "Floral Magic".
For further information please telephone 01634 863034

May 10th - Wigmore Thursday Club, What about the
Boys' Brigade? - Paul Warren, St Matthew's
Community Centre, Drewery Drive, 2.00pm. For
people over the age of 50, ring 235507 for details.

May 0th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Games, Tea &
Chat, Hempstead Village Hall, behind All Saints
Church, 169 Hempstead Road, 2.00 - 4.00pm, New
members welcome, Phone 01634 366907

May 11th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group
Millennium Centre every Friday 9.45 am-noon to help
people who have lost their spouse/partner, join us for
a cuppa & chat, ring Julie on 364309 for details.

May 11th - An evening of Clairvoyance with the
wonderful Diane Hubert, £5.00, The Centre (6th May)

May 11th - MKAS, Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood
Road, second and last Friday each month, 7.45pm.
Club Presentations - Introduction to Astronomy.
Details 07983 398326 or www.midkentastro.org.uk.

May 11 & 12th - Wigmore Mads present 'Sinbad', a
family pantomime full of fun and adventure 8.00pm
Sat Matinee 2.30pm, St Matthew's Community
Centre, Wigmore. Tickets £6 & £5 Con, Family ticket
£20 Box office Sue Burrows 01634 370639

May 12th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group walk the
Darenth Valley Path with Stephen Manning Contact
01614 375821 or menningstephen@hotmail.co.uk

May 12th - Traditional May Day Celebration, Bredhurst
C. E. P. School, More details from the school 01634
231271, office@bredhurst.kent.sch.uk

May 12th - Concerts @ GMC, Kent Police Brass Band,
Gillingham Methodist Church Third Avenue, 7.30pm,
Tickets £5.00 on the door

May 12th - St Matthew's Church, Wigmore, Plant Sale,
for times see church Notice Board

May 12th - Coffee Morning, Methodist Church Hall,
Rainham, 10.00 - 11.00am, Cake Stall, Bric-a-Brac,
Traidcraft all welcome proceeds to Christian Aid.

May 12th - RAMASES Lecture, 2.30pm, Newington
Village Hall - Martin Davies 'Ancient Egyptian
Tomb Models of Daily Life' - £6.00 Guests £8.00 on
the door, details ramasesnk@hotmail.com or from
John Dewey 01795 472316

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May 12th - 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 ring 366189 or 388546.

May 12 & 13th - Medway Flower Fair, Cozenton Park,
Rainham, 10.00am - 5.00pm Specialist nurseries and
garden related suppliers, children's activities

May 13th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group walk, meet
Chris Morris 01634 374923, 07847 828249, 10.00am,
at Camer Country Park, for a 5 mile undulating walk,
one fairly steep climb. Dogs allowed.

May 13th - Medway Ramblers Walks Meet Ray Ashby,
10.00am for 8 miles at High Halstow, St Margaret's
Church, Bring picnic lunch.

May 13th - Volunteer Task Day, Riverside Country Park
& Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm
Refreshments provided. Free register 01634 337432

May 13th - Discover Your Ancient Woodland, 10.00am
- 3.30pm details 07813 785940 or email
bwag@vanessajones.plus.com.

May 13th - Mini Beast Hunt, Riverside Country Park &
Capstone Farm Country Park 10.00am - 12noon or
1.00 - 3.00pm, Suitable for 5 - 12 years must be
accompanied by an adult, £1.50 per child book 01634
337432 or 338191

May 14th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Bingo, St. Paul's
Church, Deanwood Drive, Parkwood 2.00 - 4.00pm,
new members welcome ring 01634 366056 or 373594.

May 14th - Rainham Wives, 8.00pm, Methodist Church
Hall, Wakeley Road. 'FROGS' illustrated talk by Paul
Warren, New members of all ages very welcome, subs
£1.50 per meeting, details 01634 230639.

May 15th - Indoor Bootfair, Upchurch Village Hall,
10.00am - 12noon, £6 per table, Entrance fee 20p
donated to Kent Air Ambulance, 01795 428006 or
07968 792354

May 15th - RSPB Talk, Parkwood Community Centre,
7.30pm, £3, 'A Year in Wormwood Scrubs' David
Lindo.

May 15th - GHS Floral Art Group, 7.30 - 9.00pm
United Reformed Church, Balmoral Road, Gillingham,
'Still Waters' - water based arrangement maximum 5
blooms. Visitors welcome, contact Kay Buss 01634
232998

May 16th - Medway Ramblers Walks Meet Peter/Ann
Green 01634 718895, 7.00pm for 4 miles at Cobham
public car park. Pub at end.

May 16th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Les Morgan - Talk
'Pelagioniums', 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, 01634
233554, new members welcome.

May 17th - Rainham WI, 1.45 - 4.00pm Methodist
Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham. Annual
Meeting and Resolutions, Visitors welcome for small
entry charge per visit. Ring 01634 366276 for details

May 18 & 19th - Rainham Theatrical Society 'Happy
& Glorious' A concert to celebrate the Queens
Diamond Jubilee. Curtain up at 8.00pm, Box Office
0844 8793224 or www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

May 19th - City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra
(CRSO) Concert, 7.30pm, Central Theatre, Chatham,
Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5 and Mendelssohn
Midsummer Night's Dream Overture, Tickets £9-15,
£1 children, 01634 338338 See www.crso.org.uk.

May 19th - Instep Dancing, Rainham School for Girls,
Derwent Way, 8.00 - 11.00pm. Enquiries 01634
363738 email s.collins02@btinternet.com

May 19th - It's a Bugs Life, The Vines, Rochester, 2.00
- 4.00pm, Come dressed as your favourite bug look
for insects with Kent Wildlife Trust and The Friends
of The Vines, Children must be accompanied by an
adult, prize for t best fancy dress Free no need to book
May 19th - Garden Fete at Longford Court, 2.00 -
5.00pm, many stalls, for details 01634 364433 or
387389, proceeds to Air Ambulance.

May 19th - St Matthew's Church, Wigmore Rainham
Mark Grammar Big Band 7.30pm start - Tickets £5
(£2.50 Students) 01634 372508, sac please, to 42 The
Goldings, e-mail pawarren@hotmail.co.uk

May 19th - Rainham South Ward Councillors surgery,
Parkwood Community Centre. 9.30am - 12noon. No
appointment necessary.

May 20th - Medway Ramblers Walks Meet Peter/Ann
Green 01634 718895, 10.00am for 5 miles at Oare,
Pub at end.

May 20th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group walk,
meet Chris Morris 01634 374923, 10.00am,
Northwood Hill RSPB, for 6 mile s Dogs allowed.

May 20th - Capstone Tree Walk, Capstone Farm
Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon. Suitable for all the
family £1.50 per person, book 01634 338191

May 20th - Hempstead Village Fayre, Hempstead
Playing Fields. Information, ring 01634 230214 or
email valeriegorf@blueyonder.co.uk.

Continued on Page 11

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PANTOMIME
Wigmore MADs present 'SINBAD', a family
pantomime full of fun and adventure on
Friday 11th May, 8.00pm
Saturday 12th May at 2.30 & 8.00pm
St Matthew's Community Centre, Wigmore
Tickets £6 & £5 Concession, Family ticket £20
(2adults, 2 children)
Box office Sue Burrows 01634 370639

TRADITIONAL MAY DAY CELEBRATION
Bredhurst C. E. P. School
Saturday 12th May - May Day procession starring
local children starts at 2.00pm
Coronation of 2012 May Queen and King
St. George & the Dragon Procession
Maypole Dancing, Country Dancing
Tombola, Raffle, Face Painting,
Bouncy Castle Family Games
BBQ, Cake Stall, Refreshments, Ice Cream
Road closures will be in place for the parade
More details from the school 01634 231271,
office@bredhurst.kent.sch.uk

WIGMORE EVENTS
St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive
Saturday 12th May - Plant Sale
Buy some little gems to brighten your garden.
19th May - Rainham Mark Grammar Big Band
Big sounds and Jazz ensemble with soloists.
Please support these young musicians
7.30pm start - Tickets £5 (£2.50 Students)
26th May - Mervyn Stutter returns after his 2010
sell out concert. The comedy voice of the baby
boomer generation — and great music!
7.30pm start — Tickets £10 — sausage and chips
supper and please bring your own drinks and glasses
Tuesday 5th June - Diamond Jubilee Thanksgiving
Service on a big screen in church with a street party
on the same day

For details of events or concert tickets please phone
01634 372508, e-mail pawarren@hotmail.co.uk
or write - see please, to 42 The Goldings,

RAINHAM THEATRICAL SOCIETY
'Happy & Glorious' A concert to celebrate the
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VIDEO RACE NIGHT
Medway Neighbourhood Watch Association
Friday 25th May, 7.00pm,
United Services Club, 171 High Street, Rainham,
(licensed bar until 11.00pm)
Tickets £8 per person includes fish and chip supper,
(or chicken or sausage) sorry, adults only.
8 eight runner races with a £1 Tote
Entry by prepaid ticket only, details & to book ring
Neighbourhood Watch Office 01634 792131

JUBILEE GRAND SPRING CRAFT FAIR
The Friends of Bredhurst Cat Adoption Centre
Sunday 27th May, 11.00am - 4.00pm
Bredhurst Centre, Matts Hill Road.
There will be lots of different and exciting local and
regional crafts and goods on sale, as well as
entertainments for all ages, including a free Circus
Workshop; Face Painting; BBQs and Seasonal
Refreshments; Lots of Bric-a-Brac; Books & CDs;
Vintage Cars; Marke's Ices; Plants, etc.
A limited number of craft stalls are available for
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Linda Lisgarten asap for more details (phone 01634
377267 or email lindaligarten@hotmail.co.uk).

SUMMER SENSATION
Park Wood Schools Association
present a fun event for the whole
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Saturday June 2nd Gates Open at 11.00am
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR APRIL

I have written before about the National Nature Reserve at Elmley on the Isle of Sheppey but it deserves a revisit, particularly in the spring when male birds can be seen performing spectacular display flights. The reserve consists of one of the largest and finest examples of grazing marsh remaining in South East England. In April I crossed over The Swale and onto Sheppey via the old lift bridge and turned right upon reaching Straymarsh Farm and Cottages. The track to the RSPB headquarters at Kingshill Farm on the high ground of the Isle of Elmley passes through Chetney and Stray Marshes. I noted a few swallows hawking for flies above the marshland. The birds need open spaces over which they can swoop close to the ground for flies, preferring large ones such as bluebottles and dung flies. Swallows fly with effortless grace and have a delightful, twittering song which is symbolic of summer. Lovers of the countryside hold them in great affection. Later, I came across another group of the birds at Kingshill Farm where they were inspecting potential nest sites under the canopy of the farm's large wooden barn. Searching for worms and grubs in the grassland of the Chetney Marshes was a mixed flock of jackdaws and rooks. The jackdaws would be nesting down chimney pots in nearby Queenborough and the rooks breeding at their rookery in the horse chestnut trees in the graveyard of Holy Trinity Church.

Chetney and Stray Marshes are divided by a network of ditches, many of which are lined with common reed and sea club-rush. Pools of surface water are scattered about the marshes. At the time of my visit the water table was very low and the shallow pools had already dried out. The grassland is managed by the selective grazing of cattle and sheep so as to provide varieties of subtly different habitats. In spring the short, grazed grassland, with scattered tussocks, encourages lapwings, redshanks, yellow wagtails, skylarks and meadow pipits to breed there. I saw all of these species during my visit. I proceeded along the bumpy track, making a number of stops on the way. Birds and mammals beside the track take no notice of visitors

provided that they stay in their cars. I did however come across a lapwing chick running for cover into some long grass. The young bird was an indication that the breeding season of the lapwing was well advanced. The birds' territories are taken up in late February and March in Southern England. It is then that the spectacular display flights of the males are mostly seen. The birds engage in exuberant twisting and tumbling through the air, accompanied by mewing calls. Fortunately, I was not too late in the season to witness a couple of these aerial performances.

Brown hares are very thin on the ground in Kent and have a limited distribution. There are however quite a number of hares on the reserve, although I myself only came across one. The mammals remain crouched on the ground if alarmed and only flee if approached very closely. Hares are distinguished from rabbits by their larger size, a loping gait, long black-tipped ears and long limbs. It goes without saying that I witnessed none of the activities of so-called "mad March hares" during my visit. Skylarks are quite common on the reserve. The bird is the classical aerial singer of wide open spaces. In spring and summer the song of the skylark can be heard over large areas of farmland and is one of the most evocative countryside sounds; it is a wonderful outpouring of fast and varied warbling. I was able to approach a very tame skylark pecking among the gravel track. It may have been a female picking up grit for the shells of its eggs. Meadow pipits can be regularly seen or heard on Elmley and, like skylarks, sing in the air, albeit with a somewhat repetitive "peep" "peep" note. The pipit's song flight consists of a fluttering ascent from the ground or low perch followed by a descent with wings stiffly spread and tail tilted up. As already noted, I also came across redshanks and yellow wagtails. The former are a brown waders with bright orange legs. They are quite nervous birds and their alarm calls can sometimes cause other species within the locality to take fright. They have become known as sentinels of the marshes. The yellow wagtail is a dainty summer visitor, the male sports bright, sulphur yellow under parts.

In due course I arrived at the car park at Kingshill Farm. Disabled visitors can obtain permission to drive to the nearest hide which is a three mile return trip. The furthest hide, at Spitend, involves a return walk of over seven miles. On this occasion I went no further than Kingshill Farm. Sid Gransden and his large family lived and farmed at Kingshill for almost half a century before the lease ran out in the early 1970s. At the time of my visit the air was full of the bitter-sweet smell of the blossom of the hawthorn trees which give some shelter to the farmhouse from the prevailing south westerly winds. From the high ground on which the farm stands I had good views across the marshes towards the ridge on which Minster Church sits and down the course of The Swale in the direction of the Thames Estuary. The reserve has been described as one of the last wildernesses in South East England, a place where one can find solitude under huge skies.

Joe Ennis

RAINHAM STATION

Rainham's level crossing was the scene of a fatal accident in January 1924, when a child named Francis Cross was killed there. He was with his brothers and sisters just below the gates, which had been closed to allow a train to come through, although it was not in sight. A cyclist was approaching from the opposite side, so Francis ran across to help him by opening the wicket gate. The wickets were normally locked a minute or so after the main gates. The signalman, Ernest Everson, shouted to the cyclist to wait, and asked him to pull the child back. Both he and the cyclist called to the boy, whose sisters too shouted 'Jump!' But 10-year old Francis had been deaf and dumb from birth, and did not hear any of them. As he hesitated, the 8.45 am express from Ramsgate to Victoria came through at 50 mph, with the inevitable result.

At the subsequent inquest the Coroner asked if anything could be done to prevent a similar event. The Stationmaster, Mr Best, said that this was the first fatal accident since the station had opened sixty years previously, and stressed that this was a very busy crossing.

The jury attached no blame to any of those involved, and recommended that a subway or a footbridge should be constructed by the Railway Company. A couple of weeks later, in February, the Parish Council

decided that two or three trees in the Recreation Ground should be cut down to give the signalman a better view of an approaching train, but little else was done. By August 1925 there was still no progress, so the Council sent a reminder to the Southern Railway Company about the proposed footbridge, and its Clerk received a reply in September saying that 'there would be a further communication shortly'.

I have not yet found out exactly when the promised footbridge was erected, but in January 1926 it was in place, for the Parish council was then discussing the acquisition of land for 'the necessary footpath in Station Road leading to the new footbridge over the railway crossing'. The actual erection was apparently effected very quickly, probably overnight. Railwaymen at this period worked fast. In 1918, as a passenger train left Rainham Station between 6.00 and 7.00 am, two coaches were derailed. No-one was hurt, but both lines were blocked. A breakdown gang from Gillingham cleared one line by 8.00 am, and the other was fully operational some three hours later.

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Diary 2012

May 20th - Medway Ramblers Walks Meet Mike Patrick, 10.00am for 7.5 miles at Bicknor, Hook and Hatchet Inn (use far car park) in Hucking. Bring picnic lunch. Pub at end.

May 20th - BWAG, Volunteer Task Day, 10.00am – 2.00pm, Meet at Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst, Lunch and refreshments provided, details please call/text 07801 386264 or email stevewright50@btinternet.com

May 21st - Parkwood Leisure Club, Rev Bonnie Appleton - "About Me", (see 14th May).

May 21st - Medway Diabetes Support Group St Pauls Church Hall Parkwood Green, 7.00pm Speaker from Sunlight Trust Health and Lifestyle 07725 238464 or email medwaydiabetessupport@hotmail.co.uk

May 21st - Rainham Wives, 'Life in USA' talk by Will Grady, (see 14th May).

May 21st - Wigmore WI, 7.30pm, St Matthews Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Annual Meeting and Resolutions, Visitors welcome ring 01634 263405

May 21st - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, 7.30pm Millennium Centre, Resolutions and AGM, competition Favourite Painting, ring 01634 372282

May 24th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Songs, Stories and Anecdotes - Almond Greenway (see 10th May).

May 25th - Medway Geographical Society, Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham, 7.30 – 9.00pm AGM followed by a Geographical Quiz, Everyone Welcome, information 01634 362683

May 25th - Video Race Night, Medway Neighbourhood Watch Association, 7.00pm, United Services Club, 171 High Street, Rainham, licensed bar until 11.00pm, Tickets £8 pp includes fish and chip supper, adults only, 8 eight runner races with a £1 Tote. Entry by prepaid ticket only, 01634 792131

May 25th - MKAS, Bob Marriott - Lunar Observing visual & webcam. (see 11th May).

May 26th - Kasbah Short Breaks Life Skills Project For 16 – 19 years with mild or moderate additional needs,

Millennium Centre, Rainham 11.00am - 2.00pm, £2 contribution. Ring 07505 489049 or 07758 703627 e-mail shortbreaks@kasbah.org.uk for information

May 26th - St Matthew's Church, Wigmore, Mervyn Stutter concert, 7.30pm start Tickets £10, sausage & chips supper bring own drinks (see 19th May).

May 26th - Barnardo's Quiz Night, 7.30pm, Twydall Church Hall, Twydall Lane, Free Parking Tickets £5 each, Tables of 6 – 8 book in advance 01634 233405 or 01634 375486, Bring your own drink and nibbles Tea and coffee provided

May 26th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 12th May)

May 27th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group walk, meet John Williams 01622 764821, 10.00am, at Clowes Wood CT5 3ER for 6.5 mile walk mostly flat with one gentle climb Dogs allowed.

May 27th - Medway Ramblers Walks Meet Geoff Ettridge, 07525 161766, 10.00am for 4 miles at Sandling car park beyond the Yew Tree PH

May 27th - Friends of Bredhurst Cat Adoption Centre, Jubilee Grand Spring Craft Fair, 11.00am – 4.00pm, Bredhurst Centre, Matts Hill Road, details 01634 377267 or email lindaligarten@hotmail.co.uk

May 27th - St Augustine's, Gillingham, Big Weekend details on website www.sagk.org.uk

May 28th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Seaside Piers – Mr John Hadaway, (see 14th May).

May 28th - Rainham Wives, A Musical Evening to Celebrate the Diamond Jubilee with Dave Webster, (see 14th May).

May 31st - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service followed by "Where were you on 2nd June 1953?" (10th May May 31st - Rainham & District Dolls' House and Miniaturist Group, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside, 7.30pm, ring 01634 312038 or 366183

June 1st - St Augustine's Gillingham WII Challenge Evening details www.sagk.org.uk

June 2nd - Beginners Birdwatching (summer), Riverside Country Park, 11.00am – 12noon (classroom based), 1.00 – 3.00pm (field based), £1.50 per person Book in advance 01634 337432

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Diary 2012

June 2nd - Park Wood Schools Association Summer
Sensation, 11.00am. Bring a picnic and join in 'The Big
Lunch' www.parkwoods.co.uk

June 2nd - St. Margaret's Church "Messy Church" (see
5th May).

June 3rd - St Augustine's Gillingham 'Big Lunch' details
www.sagk.org.uk

June 3rd - Sunday Service with guest medium Diane
Hubert, £1.00 6.30-8.30pm, Healing after the service at
The Centre mind.body.spirit, (see 6th May).

June 3rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group walk, meet
Stephen Manning 01634 375821, 10.00am, at
Hollingbourne for 6 mile walk with steep climbs up
and along the Downs. Dogs allowed.

June 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group walk, meet
Joan Weekes 01634 855522, 7.00pm, Stone Horse PH
of Cliffe Road B2000 (park with care) for 4.5 mile
evening walk with a few slopes. No Dogs.

June 5th - GHS Floral Art Group, Workshop. (15th May).

June 6th - Rainham Wives, 8.00pm, Millennium Centre,
Rainham, Fun Quiz, New members of all ages
welcome, details contact Margaret Meinertzhagen
01795 475907 or Hilary Noakes 01634 364618

June 6th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm Cricket
Pavilion, Berengrave Lane, Preparing for the Show -
Gordon Francis, New members welcome, ring 366276

June 6th - Junior Ranger Team, Capstone Farm Country
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years old, £2.50 per child, book 01634 338191

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June 6th - Creative Oatmeal Clay Creatures, Riverside
Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon, Clay creatures with
a twist, may get messy making your own clay,
Suitable for aged 5 - 12 years must be accompanied
by an adult, £1.50 per child, book 01634 337432

June 7th - Parent and Child Fishing Teaching,
Capstone Farm Country Park, 9.00am - 11.00am or
12noon - 2.00pm, Aimed at beginners and those
wanting to improve. All equipment and bait supplied.
Suitable for children aged 8 - 12 years £8 per child,
book in advance 01634 338191

June 7th - Wigmore Thursday Club, A Peep Behind the
Doors - Julia Page, (see 10th May).

June 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 7.30pm,
AGM, Upchurch Village Hall All welcome, ring
01634 317993 for details.

June 8 - 10th - Rochester Dickens Festival, Castle
Gardens and The Vines 10.00am - 5.00pm

June 8th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History
Society 7.15pm United Reformed Church, Balmoral
Rd, Gillingham, Members Evening, 01634 854982.

June 8th - MKAS, Members Exhibition (see 11th May)

June 9th & 10th - Chatham & District Model Railway
Club's annual Model Rail Show at The Historic
Dockyard Chatham, 10.00am - 5.00pm, Tickets £7 &
£5.50 Concessions, Family (2+3) £15, free parking.
www.chathamshow.co.uk

June 9th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 12th May).

June 10th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group walk,
meet John Williams 01622 764821, 10.00am, at East
Malling Village Fields Car Park for 5.5 miles fairly
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