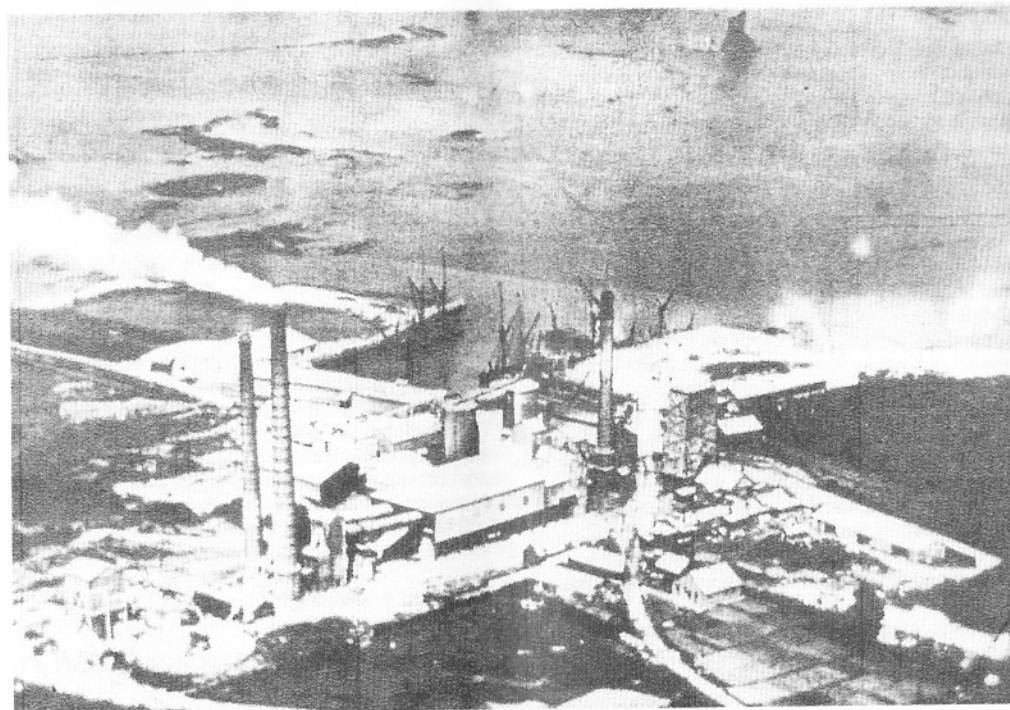


ACTION FORUM

NOVEMBER 2012

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■

NUMBER 482



The British Standard Cement Works to the east of Motney Hill Road, Lower Rainham shortly before it closed in 1931. Only the Vikers kiln which had been added around 1923 was still working. We include a short history of the works by Jim Preston on page 9.

Robert J. Kitney

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AF Next Issue December 1st 2012
 Copy Date: Nov 13th, Sm Ads Nov 21st
 Editorial: Barbara Mackay Miller
 Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller
 Action Forum Office
 21 Station Rd, Rainham ME8 7RS
 (above Sunburst Books)
 Telephone: 01634 310011
 Email: af@thenet.uk.net

Editorial

One of the regular outings we looked forward to during the Autumn Half Term holiday, when our children were of an age to relish such expeditions, was 'chestnutting'. Conkers from the Horse Chestnut trees are always down first and they make for easier gathering as they do not have the spikes on their outer cases. It is very satisfying finding the large smooth, shiny dark brown fruit and I think this and the subsequent battle to bore holes through for the necessary strings was more fun than actually playing the game – a few bruised knuckles and the children had soon had enough – I don't think we had the requisite skills or knew the rules well enough! Having tired of the delights of conkers we then visited various woods in Kent looking for sweet chestnuts to eat. One of our best discoveries was near Faversham. Driving along a country lane, by Sharsted Court, on a windy autumnal day the entire road was inches deep with chestnut husks and the nuts just littered the ground. No gloves were needed that day as we picked up dozens of enormous chestnuts in no time at all. We just happened upon the spot at the optimum time. Revisiting in subsequent years it is obviously well known and never again have I seen such abundance, although you can still usually find a good harvest. However we did not need to venture that far away as there are several good chestnutting spots in and around this area. Having gathered the chestnuts I always feel a great sense of achievement if I manage to prepare and freeze sufficient to serve with our Brussels sprouts at Christmas dinner. Locally sourced chestnuts are an essential part of our Christmas lunch, probably more so even than the turkey – certainly for the vegetarian! The problem when the family were young, as it is a time consuming job, was managing to complete the work before they were all eaten. This year I had been afraid that for the first time I would not be able to gather my free fruits, the best tree I have relied on for many years seems barren and there have been various warnings in the press about poor harvests. However I have managed to find a replacement supply. A nearby tree which has never before produced much of a crop of any size seems suddenly to have come good, so all should be well! If you feel it is too soon to be preparing for Christmas we do have other items to interest you this month although there are also a large number of Fayres, Craft Fairs and Sales all featuring Christmas in their title at

the end of November and beginning of December. If you would love to get to grips with a computer, but have no idea where to start, Rainham School for Girls are offering free Silver Surfer courses in their new Independent Research Centre. You could go back to school and with the roles reversed be expertly tutored in how to surf the net, use a smart phone, download and use an App, begin on-line shopping and send emails and attachments by one of the pupils at the school. Alternatively if the television Choir programmes have rekindled your interest in singing Upchurch Choral Society are seeking a new Music Director – a demanding job I am sure – are you up to the challenge?

Lots to do this month: our diary is packed with walks, concerts, dances, social meetings, volunteering opportunities and of course Christmas sales so do enjoy November and we will be back again, full of excitement, in December.

Correspondence

SILVER SURFERS COURSES

Dear Editor,

Rainham School for Girls are offering free Silver Surfers courses for people who would like to learn how to surf the net, use a smart phone, download and use an App, start on-line shopping, send emails and attachments, and many other skills.

These will be on Tuesdays from 3.20 – 4.30pm in our new Independent Research Centre. There will be 1:1 help and support from our volunteer year 10 students.

If any readers are interested, please phone 01634 362746 and ask for Mrs Moon.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Moon

Director of Research and Community Liaison
 Rainham School for Girls

CHRISTMAS FAYRE & ST NICHOLAS DISPLAY

Dear Editor

It has become a tradition at St Matthews Church, Wigmore to combine their Christmas Fayre with Special Christmas displays showing the various customs and methods by which Christmas is celebrated in different parts of the world.

So this year, apart from all the favourite seasonal stalls – craft-work, refreshments etc – you will be able to enjoy a display of Father Christmas' through history and from around the world.

Our Christmas Fayre takes place on Saturday 8th December 12noon until 2.00pm but the display is open to the public for the whole weekend 10.00am until 4.00pm on Saturday 8th and 11.00am until 1.00pm on Sunday 9th. We hope you will be able to join us in the start of the run up to your Christmas celebrations.

Yours sincerely

Paulette Pointon
 Events Committee
 01634 231650

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Dear Editor

The Friends of Bredhurst Cat Adoption Centre will be holding their legendary Grand Christmas Bazaar on Saturday 24th November from 11.00am – 1.00pm at St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. Don't miss the beautiful bargains galore, with a huge selection of new seasonal goods as well as quality bric a brac at low prices; raffles; toys tombola; books and toys; local crafts, and lovely seasonal refreshments will be available throughout! Entrance is only 30p. All the profits go towards helping the many desperately needy cats awaiting their new forever homes at the Adoption Centre. Have a lovely morning and get all your Christmas shopping at bargain prices whilst supporting this very good work!

Yours faithfully,

Linda Lisgarten,

Friends of Bredhurst Cat Adoption Centre.

CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

Dear Editor

Bredhurst Woodland Action Group are holding their Christmas Carol Concert on Thursday 6th December at 7.30pm. The Cantium Singers, a 50 strong choir from Rochester, will perform at St Peter's Church, followed by mulled wine, mince pies and Grand Christmas Raffle at Green Court, The Street, Bredhurst. Tickets are £6 per person (children under 16 free) and can only be purchased in advance (tickets will not be on sale on the day) from Jim Chalmers on 07870 878907 email jimchalmers@hotmail.co.uk All proceeds go towards the conservation of Bredhurst Woods.

Regards

Vanessa Jones
 Chairman BWAG

07813 785940 www.bwag.org.uk

BABY MASSAGE COURSE

St Paul's Church, Parkwood.

12th, 19th & 26th November

3 week course costs £3. Taken by Elaine Wheeler on behalf of The 139 Club, part of Medway Family Matters. To enrol e-mail babymassage@familymattersmedway.org.uk Next course will be held in February.

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ART EXHIBITION

November 2nd – 30th

Paintings by Local Artists

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Rainham Library, Birling Avenue

Normal opening hours

GILLINGHAM AND RAINHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

United Reformed Church, Balmoral Road Gillingham

Friday 9th November, 7.15pm

Kentish Ghosts - Dennis Chambers

Further information can be obtained from,

Ron Baker, 01634 854982

COFFEE MORNING

Methodist Church Hall, Rainham

Saturday 10th November, 10.00 – 11.00am,

Cake Stall, Bric-a-Brac and Traidcraft Table,

All welcome for coffee and a chat

proceeds to Church Funds.

CRAFT FAIR

Rainham Evening WI

Saturday November 10th, 10.00am - 12noon

Millennium Centre, Rainham

Entrance 30p Refreshments available

BARN DANCE

Hands & Gillingham Volunteer Centre
 (with Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research)

are holding a fundraising Barn Dance

at Dobbies Garden World

on Saturday 10th November, 7.00 for 7.30pm start

Tickets £8 per person

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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: 13th November

November 3rd – St Margaret's Autumn Bazaar, 10.00am – 2.30pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, 01795 475907
November 3rd - Charity Day Table Top Event, 12noon - 3.00pm, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall, 263622
November 3rd - Upchurch Family Fireworks, Westmoor Farm off the A2, Rainham, 5.30pm £5 under 16, £7 Adult, £20 Family Ticket , Car parking free, pay at the gate, www.upchurchfireworks.co.uk
November 3rd - Craft Fair, 11.00am - 2.30pm, Methodist Church Hall, Station Road, Entry 30p, 01634 389502
November 3rd – Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Rd, 7.30 – 10.00pm. New and experienced dancers welcome with or without a partner, details 01634 366189 or 388546
November 4th – Medway Ramblers Walk, Meet Mike Patrick, 10.00am, south of Leysdown ME12 4RJ, TR044698 for 8 mile walk to Harty Church bird sanctuary Shell Beach and naturist beach. Short pub or picnic stop halfway. Pubs, cafes etc at end.
November 4th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk, meet Patricia Daniels 07960 295164, 10.00am, Strood Civic Centre Car Park (Charges allow 4 hours) for 6.5 mile 6 bridges walk mainly flat two thirds tarmac, 1 stile, opportunity to visit Temple Manor, no dogs.
November 5th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Newington Concert Party, St Paul's Church, Deanwood Drive, 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome 01634 366056
November 5th – Rainham Wives, 8.00pm, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham, Quiz Time plus nibbles. New members of all ages very welcome, subs £1.50 per meeting, details 01634 230639.
November 6th – Gillingham Horticultural Society Floral Art Group, 7.30 – 9.00pm United Reformed Church (rear hall), Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 'Remembrance' own choice arrangement. Visitors welcome, contact Kay Buss 01634 232998
November 7th – Medway Ramblers Walk, Meet Allan Buchan, 10.00am, Newington car park (behind Acorn Car Wash on A2) for 10 mile walk circular, mainly flat via Lower Halstow, Bring picnic lunch

November 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30 pm Cricket Pavilion, Berengrave Lane, Rainham, Woodland Trust – John Harvey, New members welcome, ring 366276 for details.
November 8th - Donn Barcott Band, Jazz Five 5 Live, 44two Sports and Social, Featherby Road, Gill, 8.30 – 11.00pm, Licensed Bar, Details 01634 405037
November 8th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Downe Dame Calendars - Barbara Stevens, Community Centre, Drewery Drive, 2.00pm. For over 50, ring 235507
November 9th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham every Friday 9.45am - noon to help people who have lost their spouse/partner, join us for a cuppa & chat, ring Julie on 364309 for details.
November 9th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History Society, United Reformed Church, Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.15pm, 'Kentish Ghosts' Dennis Chambers, Details from Ron Baker 01634 854982
November 9th - MKAS, Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood Road, second and last Friday each month, 7.45pm, Ian King, Details 07983 398326 or visit www.midkentastro.org.uk.
November 9th - Barnardo's Pre-Christmas Evening, 8.00pm, Millennium Centre, Donations and gifts appreciated. Tickets £3.50, children £1 (includes refreshments) from committee members 01634 233405, 375486 or on the door.
November 9th - Ghost Tours, Fort Amherst, Dock Road, Chatham, Tour Times 7.30 - 8.30pm, 1 hour 15 minutes , Tickets £10, No under 8's ring 01634 847747 or see www.fortamherst.com for details.
November 10th - Craft Fair, Rainham Evening WI, 10.00am - 12noon, Millennium Centre, Rainham, Entrance 30p, Refreshments available
November 10th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk, meet Stephen Manning 01634 375821 or 07598 330622, The Jubilee Greenway Walk ring for details.

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November 10th – Coffee Morning, Methodist Church Hall, Rainham, 10.00 – 11.00am, Cake Stall, Bric-a-Brac and Traidcraft Table, all welcome for coffee and a chat, proceeds to Church Funds.
November 10th, 17th, 24th & Dec 1st - RSG Youth Academy, Rainham School for Girls, 10.00am to 12noon. See www.rsg.org.uk or ring 01634 362746, email rya@rsg.org.uk for details
November 10th - Hands & Gillingham Volunteer Centre (with Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research) Barn Dance, Dobbies Garden World, 7.30pm start, Tickets £8 pp, Hot Supper Included (bring your own drink, glasses provided) tickets 01634 362119
November 11th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk, meet Joan Weekes 01634 855522, 10.00am at Stone Horse PH off Cliffe Road B2000 for 4.5 mile walk with a few slopes, no dogs.
November 11th – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Graham Jenkinson 07989 753278, 10.00am, Wateringbury public car park off Bow Road near the traffic lights to catch the 10.06am bus to Tonbridge for 10 mile walk - downhill all the way! Bring picnic lunch. Pub at end. Do not forget your Bus Pass.
November 11th – Medway Ramblers Walk, Meet Tony/Ann Faulkner 01634 406634, 10.00am at Charing Rail Station (charges) TN27 0HZ. TQ950491 for 5.5 mile walk. Pub at end with lunches
November 11th - Volunteer Task Day, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am – 2.00pm, help Park volunteers for the day. An ideal opportunity to learn what they do and talk to volunteers. Refreshments provided. Free register interest 01634 337432
November 12th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Bingo, (see 5th Nov).
November 12th - Rainham Wives, 'Songs with Matthew' a musical evening with Matthew Crane, (see 5th Nov).
November 12th - Baby Massage Course, St Paul's Church, Parkwood. 3 week course - £3. Taken by Elaine Wheeler on behalf of The 139 Club, part of Medway Family Matters. Next course February. email babymassage@familymattersmedway.org.uk
November 13th - Medway Antique And Collectors' Club, The History of the Music Hall, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 7.30 for 8.00pm All visitors most welcome. Enquiries Miss E Boyes 01474 823606
November 14th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall, Mrs Betty Tuur - Christmas Traditions, 01634 389966

November 14th – All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 'Make a Carol'. New members always welcome, contact 07951 629444
November 14th - Medway Poetry Group meet 40, Birling Avenue, Rainham 7.30 – 9.30pm, all interested welcome, ring 01634 260228 for details.
November 14th - Rainham Flower Club, Upchurch Village Hall, 7.30pm, Demonstration by Susan Phillips 'A touch of sparkle' ring 01634 863034
November 15th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Volunteering at the Olympics and Other Places - Mike Collins, (see 8th Nov).
November 15th - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 - 4.00pm, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham. Mingle Meeting - Quiz, Visitors welcome for small entry charge. Ring 01634 366276
November 16th – Applause Rural Touring Theatre - Grimm's Fairy Tale Hansel & Gretel by the Fairgame Theatre, 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Tickets £8 from Ann Keeble 01634 361263
November 16th – Jazz Gig, RAF Association Club, Dock Road, Chatham, 8.30pm, Steve Waterman/ Matt Wates Quintet, Admission £10, All Enquiries 01634 365352 or 07544 312743 Website Coljazz.webs.com
November 16th - Ladies pamper evening in aid of Medway Asthma Self-Help, £2 entry, 7.30 - 10.30pm, Gillingham Golf Club Woodlands Road, Enquiries Wendy 07806 779671 or MASH office 01634 855844
November 17th - Rainham South Councillors surgery, Parkwood Community Centre 9.30am - 12 noon. No appointment necessary.
November 17th - Hempstead Village Fayre Committee in association with All Saints' Church, Christmas Fayre, Hempstead Village Hall and All Saints' Church, Hempstead Road, 11.30am – 3.30pm.
November 17th – Medway Folk Dance Club, (3rd Nov).
November 17th – Instep Dancing, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, 8.00 – 11.00pm. Enquiries 01634 363738 email s.collins02@btinternet.com
November 18th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk, meet John Trebill 01634 244045, 10.00am at Filston Lane, Shoreham car park TQ 518615 for 6.5 mile hilly in places walk, no dogs.
November 18th - Bird Box and Animal Home Making, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am – 12noon, £5 per home book 01634 338191

Continued on Page 11

P. Gillard

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take place weekly in St. Mary's Church, Upchurch
from 8.00 – 9.30pm on Fridays. The repertoire
includes both sacred and secular music.
For further details please contact the secretary,
Liz Walters, on 01634 361897

LADIES PAMPER EVENING
In aid of Medway Asthma Self-Help (MASH)
Friday 16th November, 7.30pm - 10.30pm
Gillingham Golf Club, Woodlands Road, Gillingham
£2 entry includes a gift bag
Massage, reflexology, manicures etc
Jewellery, handbags, make up and much more
Come along with friends – try out new therapies
Any queries, please ring Wendy 07806 779 671
or MASH office 01634 855844

CONCERT
The City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra
Saturday 24th November, 7.30pm
Central Theatre, Chatham
Borodin: Overture to Prince Igor
Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 2
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5
Soloist: Alexander Ardakov
Tickets (£9-15) from the Central Theatre Box Office
on 01634 338338 www.crso.org.uk

WINE AND WISDOM
St Matthew's Church fund raising committee
Saturday 24th November 7.00 for 7.30pm
St Matthew's Community Centre, Wigmore.
Tickets £6, suggested tables 6-8 people.
Bring your own food and drink.
For more information contact Alan Spearink
01634 370492 or atspearink@yahoo.com

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BARNARDO'S PRE-CHRISTMAS EVENING
Friday 9th November, 8.00pm
Lower Hall, Millennium Centre, Rainham
Admission £3.50, children £1

HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE CHRISTMAS FAYRE
In association with All Saints' Church
Saturday 17th November, 11.30am - 3.30pm
Hempstead Village Hall & All Saints' Church,
Fairview School CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
Saturday 24th November, doors open 1.30pm
Admission 30p (pre-school free) details 302961

Cat Adoption Centre CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
Saturday 24th November from 11.00am – 1.00pm
St Matthew's Community Centre, Entrance 30p.

CHRISTMAS ART AND CRAFT FAYRE
Sunday, 25th November, 10.30am - 3.00pm
Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside, Wigmore.
details 01634 235733 or barbara.trigg@sky.com

Darby & Joan Clubs CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
Upchurch Village Hall
28th November, 10.00am - 12noon
Contact 01634 268476 for more details

SCOUTS CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE
Saturday 1st December, 11.00am -1.00pm,
The St. Georges Hall Scout Headquarters,
Berengrave Lane, Entry 50p adults, children free.
Tables (£10 each) contact Julie 01634 361061

St Peter's Bredhurst CHRISTMAS FAYRE
Saturday, December 1st, 2.00pm Village Hall,
Admission 50p. Charity shop open 1.30pm

HARTLIP CHRISTMAS FAIR
Saturday 1st December, 10.00am – 2.00pm
Hartlip Village Hall

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR
St.Margaret's Church; Lower Halstow
Saturday 1st December, 2.00pm - 4.00pm

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
St. Matthew's Community Centre, Wigmore.
December 8th - 12noon, 2.00pm, 01634 262197.

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR OCTOBER

Last October we visited the annual Apple Festival at Brogdale Farm on the outskirts of Faversham. The farm is home to the National Fruit Collection, the largest assembly of different varieties of fruit trees in the world, including 2,300 different apple varieties. The collection is not simply a living museum; it is an important gene bank for future fruit breeders. The main attractions of the festival were tours of the orchards and the testing and sales of apples but there were also displays and demonstrations of gun dogs, falconry, flower arranging, cooking, gardening and horticulture.

We first went on a guided tour of the orchards. Before we moved off the guide gave us us all a short history of apple growing. All domestic apples have their origins in the mountains on the boundary between China and Kazakhstan. The Romans brought the first domestic apples to Britain some 2,000 years ago; they were a more palatable alternative to our own sour, small, native crab apples. After the Romans left this country, the art of apple growing was kept alive in a handful of monasteries until the arrival of the Normans who brought certain varieties of domestic apples from Normandy. Even so, most apples growing in England during the Middle Ages were too sour to eat and were therefore turned to cider. The situation began to change after the fruiterer of Henry VIII, Richard Harris, established this country's first large apple, pear and cherry collection at Teynham. He imported apple grafts from France and pear and cherry grafts from the Netherlands. The 18th and 19th centuries were the golden age of English apples when varieties like Bramley's Seedling became household names.

That brief history lesson over, we commenced our tour. The apples pointed out to us were in various shapes, sizes and colours. Names such as Chelmsford Wonder and Braintree Seedling were a reminder that, in the past, apple varieties were developed locally. Armed with a pocket knife, the guide handed out slices of certain apples for us to taste. We were shown a tree of red and cream apples of the variety "Decio"

which is the oldest, by far, in the collection. The variety dates back to Roman times and was named after a Roman general. Unfortunately we were not allowed to taste that particular one. The guide told us that Brogdale's apples are sold in the farm's shop and at local greengrocers. Any apples unfit for sale are fed to Gloucester Old Spot pigs kept on the farm and owned by Brogdale Butchers who have a shop on the premises.

We also had a look at one or two pear, quince and medlar trees. We were shown a wild pear tree with very small and hard fruit. Growing in the shape of a bushy shrub, it originated from a Site of Special Scientific Interest in the Tamar Valley. By contrast we saw some Belgian "Beurre" pear trees whose fruit "simply melts in one's mouth". Unfortunately, the fruit had already been picked. We were told that the large, yellow, soft fruit of the quince tree is too strongly flavoured to be eaten raw and is used to make jelly, to flavour apple pies or to add to other fruit in the making of preserves. The hard, sour fruits of the medlar tree are stored until they become soft when they are either made into a jelly or eaten as a dessert. Both fruits were highly favoured by the Victorians.

On finishing the tour we headed for the Courtyard restaurant and inspected the menu. As expected, the main courses and the desserts were mostly apple based. Having spent the morning sampling apples and intending to do the same in the afternoon, we needed a change, and so had a snack at one of the food stalls in a barn. Afterwards we headed for a large marquee in which visitors could taste and buy apples. Here, on display, were varieties of old English dessert apples which are not generally stocked by the supermarkets such as James Grieve, Worcester Permain, Laxton's Superb, Blenheim Orange, Cox's Orange Pippin and Egremont Russet. I myself had a taste of a Cox and a Russet. The member of staff who served us, and who clearly knew his onions, suggested that the Cox had a deliciously sweet and richly aromatic flavour; and who was I to disagree with him. The Russet was described as having a very distinctive, nutty flavour. Having arrived home with a good supply of Cox's

and Russets it was time for reflection on our day out. With so many people inspecting the Brogdale orchards on Apple Weekend it was not surprising that we saw so little wildlife. Visiting redwings, fieldfares, starlings and blackbirds may, however, be seen feeding on the fallen apples, particularly after the hawthorn and other berries have been eaten up. Modern commercial orchards, with their serried rows of dwarf trees, be they apple, pear or cherry, are fairly lifeless compared with the very few orchards that survive from the age of mixed farming. Sheep grazed under the large, standard fruit trees in those orchards, although pigs would often be turned loose in them in order to mop up fallen fruit. They were the habitat of, among other birds, barn, little and tawny owls; green, great spotted and lesser spotted woodpeckers; nuthatches; and great and blue tits.

Joe Ennis

BRITISH STANDARD PORTLAND CEMENT WORKS by Jim Preston

The firm of E. J. and W. Goldsmith of Grays were the largest barge owners in Essex with at one point 147 sailing barges, many of which were engaged in the transportation of cement on the Thames and Medway. When many of the cement firms merged to form Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers in 1901 the new combine acquired its own fleet of barges, reducing the freights available to Goldsmith's. As a result the firm entered the chalk quarrying industry in 1901, working a quarry to the south of the Lower Rainham Road, just east of Berengrave Lane [O.S. ref TQ 820 671]. The quarry was connected by a tramway to a wharf to the west of Motney Hill Road which had been used by the East Rainham brickworks [O.S. ref TQ 823 673] back in the 1860s. Their barges could then be used to carry the chalk to independent cement works which had no supply of chalk of their own such as Elmley and Queenborough. Goldsmiths were afraid of losing their share of the cement trade on the Thames after a second merger of independent cement firms to form the British Portland Cement Manufacturers in 1911. To remain independent of APCM and BPCM they constructed their own cement works in 1912 just to the east of Motney Hill Road [O.S. ref TQ 822 674]. The new works were equipped with the then most up to date plant including a rotary kiln supplied by Ernest Newells of Misterton, Nottinghamshire who were leading kiln manufacturers in the early part of the twentieth century. This kiln was 202 feet long with a diameter of 10 feet. This was a wet

process kiln fired with coal dust capable of producing 150 tons of clinker per day, feeding into a rotary cooler before grinding. Production started in 1913. Somewhere around 1923 a second rotary kiln, this time supplied by Vickers was added. This kiln was 198 feet 6 inches long with a diameter of c.10 feet, again wet process, feeding a rotary cooler, but capable of 165 tons of clinker per day.

The works were acquired in 1927 by the Home Group who sold cement under the Red Triangle trade mark, and who were buying up independent cement works. The Home Group proceeded to modernise the works "at considerable expense". Unfortunately this was bad timing just before the Depression hit. A cement price war broke out in 1928 which only ended in November 1928 when the Home Group and other independent producers joined the 'Cement Manufacturers Association' which fixed production quotas for the industry. The Home Group then failed due to lack of finance after the price war and possible poor management leading to inefficiency. The first kiln went out of production in 1929, leaving the plant working at only 59% of capacity, which was uneconomic. The Home Group was liquidated in 1931. The labour force was laid off by the liquidator, who sold the works to Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers. APCM appointed a works manager whose job appears to have been to supervise the dismantling of the plant. APCM had no intention of reopening the works, the reason for the purchase was that under the cement marketing agreements each works had been allocated a production quota, and APCM could reallocate the British Standard works quota to increase capacity at their other works [Chatham News, 6th November 1931, page 5]. The plant was dismantled with the more modern equipment being removed to their other plant, including the Vickers kiln which was installed at Magheramome cement works in Ulster.

Little trace remains of the cement works or the adjacent dock. The vertical walls of the quay have been re-profiled by Medway Council, and the walls of dock side store houses levelled. The works site is now part of a nature reserve and has been reclaimed by scrub and bramble. Any buildings have been levelled, but it is possible to find a few traces of the footprint of the silos and kiln bases. The washmills in the quarry have survived to above ground level, and may be substantially interpreted. These are being excavated by the Friends of Berengrave, and more details of progress so far may be found at their website: www.friendsofberengrave.btik.com.

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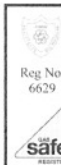
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Diary 2012

November 18th – Medway Ramblers Walk, Meet Mike Patrick, 10.00am, commuter car park just north of Bredhurst for 6.5 mile walk via Darland Banks, Capstone Country Park and Hempstead. Bring snack. Pub at end.

November 18th - BWAG, Volunteer Task Days, Third Sunday Every Month (all year), 10.00am – 2.00pm, Meet Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst, Lunch and refreshments provided, details call/text Steve Wright 07801 386264 or email stevewright50@btinternet.com

November 19th - Baby Massage Course, (see 12th Nov).

November 19th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Quiz, (see 5th Nov).

November 19th – Rainham Wives, Silent Auction for our Charity (see 5th Nov).

November 19th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, 7.30pm Millennium Centre, Rainham, Life in a Kentish Workhouse – Mrs Helen Allison, competition Something Frightening, ring 01634 372282 for details.

November 19th - Wigmore WI, 7.30pm, St Matthews Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Lesley Gould - Japanese Festivals, Visitors welcome 01634 263405

November 20th – GHS Floral Art Group, 'Topiary Tree' and pre show discussion. (see 6th Nov).

November 20th - Christmas Bring and Buy, Women's Fellowship, Gillingham Methodist Church, Third Avenue, 2.30 - 3.45pm, Cup of Tea & Mince pie 50p
November 20th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30 - 9.45pm, £3.00, Gardening for Wildlife – Adrian Thomas. For Walks see www.medway-rspb.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk.

November 21st – Bredhurst Garden Club, Eamon French - Talk 'RNLI' with Gift Stall', 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, 01634 233554, new members welcome.

November 22nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, The Great Storm - Bob Ogley, (see 8th Nov).

November 23rd - Medway Geographical Society, Byron Primary School, Gillingham, 7.30 – 9.00pm, 'FROGS

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November 24th - Hedge Planting, Celebrating National Tree Week, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am – 1.00pm hot refreshments provided, £1.50 per person book 01634 338191

November 24th - Christmas Bazaar, Fairview Community Primary School, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. Doors open 1.30pm, Admission 30p (pre-school free), details 01634 302961

November 24th – GHS Floral Art Group, 2.30 – 4.30pm United Reformed Church (rear hall), Balmoral Road, Gillingham, Christmas Show, 01634 232998

November 24th - Wine and Wisdom at St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. Tickets £6, bring your own food and drink. Teams of 6-8, 7.00pm for 7.30 prompt start to book ring Alan or Tina 01634 370492

November 24th - City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Central Theatre, Chatham, 7.30pm, Tickets £9 -15 from Box Office 01634 338338 www.crso.org.uk

November 25th - Volunteer Task Day, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am – 2.00pm help volunteers for the day. Refreshments provided. Free register interest 01634 338191

November 25th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk, meet Mo Fleisig 01634 362743, 10.00am at Village Hall car park, Lees Court Road, Sheldwich TQ 014563 for 5.75 mile mostly flat walk, no dogs.

November 25th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Meet Madge Goatman and Frank Ewen, 10.00am Upchurch Golf Club, Oak Lane (use overflow car park) for 4.5 mile circular walk

November 25th - Christmas Art and Craft Fayre, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside, 10.30am - 3.00pm, exhibition and sale of watercolour paintings and photographs Entry free, details 01634 235733 or e-mail barbara.trigg@sky.com

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Diary 2012

November 26th - Baby Massage Course (see 12th Nov).
November 26th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Christmas
Lunch, (see 5th Nov).

November 26th - Rainham Wives, 'A Very Merry
Christmas' talk by June Faulkner (see 5th Nov).

November 28th - Upchurch Darby & Joan Clubs
Christmas Bazaar, Village Hall, 10.00am - 12noon. All
Welcome, Contact 01634 268476

November 28th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
Christmas Meal, (see 14th Nov).

November 29th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service
followed by "Teachers' Tales", (see 8th Nov).

November 29th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside,
7.30pm, ring 01634 312038 or 366183 for details.

November 30th - Winter Spirit Walk, 8.00pm for 2 hours
(approx) Fort Amherst, Dock Road, Chatham, All
Tickets £12.50, Book on line, No under 18's For more
Information ring 01634 847747 www.fortamherst.com

November 30th - MKAS Peter Parish - Constellation of
the month (see 9th Nov).

December 1st - St. Margaret's Church; Lower Halstow,
Christmas Craft Fair, 2.00pm - 4.00pm, Refreshments.

December 1st - Christmas Fayre, St. Peter's Church
2.00pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood Road,
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December 1st - Christmas Fair, 10.00am - 2.00pm,
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December 1st - Scouts Craft Fayre, 11.00am - 1.00pm,
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Lane, for 4th Gillingham (Rainham) Sea Scouts
Entry 50p adults, children free. Refreshments, to
book a table (£10 each) contact Julie 01634 361061

December 2nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet Chris Morris 01634 374923, 07847
828249 at Upchurch Golf Club for a 4.5 mile
Christmas Dinner walk, no dogs.

December 3rd - Rainham Wives, Christmas Meal (5th)
December 3rd - Parkwood Leisure Club, Christmas
Service, (see 5th Nov).

December 4th - GHS Floral Art Group, Christmas get
together and post show discussion (see 6th Nov).

December 5th - Rainham Horticultural Society, AGM,
(see 7th Nov).

December 6th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Celebration
of Christmas - Anne Carter, (see 8th Nov).

December 8th - Christmas Fayre, St Matthew's
Community Centre, Wigmore, 12noon - 2.00pm, for
more details contact Tracy 01634 262197.

December 8th - Medway Folk Dance Club, Christmas
Dance, (see 3rd Nov).

December 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
Meet Stephen Manning 01634 375821 07598 330622
for the Jubilee Greenway walk, ring for details

December 9th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet Gillian Smith 01622 710569 at
Buckhurst 2 Car Park, Suffolk Way, Sevenoaks for a
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December 10th - Lions Club Santa Sleigh Run, 6.00 -
8.15pm, Hempstead



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