

ACTION FORUM

NOVEMBER 2013
NUMBER 493

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



Rainham Theatrical Society celebrate their 50th anniversary this year. This picture shows the cast from the recent September production of 'The Darling Buds of May' by H E Bates.

Back row from left to right: Alan Godman (Pa Larkin), Helen Caston (Ma Larkin), Marin Pearce (Lilly), Carly Caller (Mariette), Liam Feekings (Montgomery)

Front row from left to right: Jamie Pedpodesta (Petunia), Andy Anderson (Charley), Natalie Sharpe (Zinnia), Amanda Waters (Victoria), Colin Mepstead (Brigadier) and Megan Chapman (Primrose)

See the article about the Oasthouse Theatre by Dean Caston on page 9.

Robert J. Kitney

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Next Issue December 7th 2013
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Editorial

Autumn has suddenly burst upon us and with it an abundance of 'food for free' in the hedgerows. This year is particularly good for blackberries, wild apples, hazel nuts and chestnuts. Litter thrown from car windows is usually just an eyesore nuisance which needs to be picked up. However there are some merits in discarded apple cores as these can grow into prolific fruit trees - the free apples are then available to anyone who cares to walk along the verge. If you have confidence in your fungi identifying abilities there are mushrooms galore this year but I am reluctant to trust even the most harmless looking specimen having read too many horror stories in the newspapers. Conkers are another autumn bonus, not as food of course but the big shiny nut is irresistible when you see them on the ground after a strong wind, they just have to be picked up. For generations small boys have enjoyed bashing them to bits but a few years ago I heard of another use. Scatter a few around your house and it will rid you of spiders for a considerable time. Seems improbable, and it is dismissed by the scientific community as an old wives tale, but it does seem to work. Some suggest the conkers give of a repellent smell that deters the spiders but whatever it is the spiders and short lived Daddy-long-legs that crowded round our kitchen window have gone. At the moment we seem to be having one glorious sunny, warm autumn day followed by a dull, overcast and wet period so if you are able to do make the most of the good times to get out and about. We are all being reminded that we need to take more exercise, the latest wisdom seems to suggest that we need 150 minutes of mild exertion a week. Contrary to previous reports housework no longer counts, we do it too slowly and do not raise our heartbeat apparently. 150 minutes does not sound a great deal but in a busy working life it is not easy to squeeze out half an hour a day, there is always something else that needs doing more urgently than just going out for exercise. Still I know I do feel better when I make time for a daily walk so the question is 'an extra half hour in bed or a brisk stride along the riverside each day?' So far on the bright, mild days the riverside has won but I have a feeling as winter approaches I may not be quite so keen. If you need encouragement to get out and walk and would prefer company there are many organised groups to help - you can start at your own pace and progress gently as you get fitter so there is really no

excuse - make your mind up start today! Christmas is rapidly approaching and this month we feature many Fayres and attractions celebrating the festival. You are very welcome to attend any or all of these to get you in the Christmas mood and start the annual task of buying the presents. Have a very good month, see you again in December.

Correspondence

SILVER SURFERS

Dear Editor,

Have you ever wanted to use email, use a smart phone, use a word document, surf the net? Rainham School for Girls is providing Free guidance and support for 'would be' Silver Surfers.

There will be one-to-one support from the real experts, our students. Bring your own laptop or use our computers. The sessions will be Tuesdays, 12th, 19th, 26th November and 3rd December, from 3.15 - 4.00pm. If you are interested, please phone Mrs Moon 01634 362746. We look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely
Mrs K Moon

Director of Research and Community Liaison

FATHER CHRISTMAS AT LOWER HALSTOW

Dear Editor

Father Christmas is coming to Lower Halstow on Saturday 23rd November at the Memorial Hall, School Lane, arriving at 11 o'clock and staying until 2.00pm. Joe the pony will be bringing Father Christmas on his trap, so please give him a warm welcome, (by the way children, Joe loves sliced apple or sliced carrots). Inside the Memorial Hall there will be a Warm and Christmassy Welcome for Everyone. There will be Hot Toddlies of Mulled Wine with Mince Pies, Cups of Tea/Coffee and biscuit's, A Sugar Craft Demonstration, A gentle man called Wayne doing Caricatures of you, or maybe bring a good clear photograph of someone, so that Wayne could do a caricature of them for a wonder surprise Christmas present (photograph caricatures cost £15 incl. P&P) but the caricatures done on the day costs only £3 each. Latest Fashion in Jewellery, Beautiful Christmas Wrapping Paper, Cards and Ribbons etc. Hand Made Wood Crafts, Home Made Cakes and Pies, Christmas Candles to decorate your home, or to give as presents, handmade crocheted gifts, and lots of other very interesting stalls. See you there.

Kindest Regards
Kay Howard-Challis

OLIVER AUDITIONS

Three Towns Theatre Company will be holding open auditions for children to appear in Oliver! which will be our Spring 2014 production. They will be held on December 1st We will be looking to cast Oliver, the Artful Dodger and orphans. If you are interested, please call Gwinny Loft 01634 360392 for more details.

FESTIVE BARNARDO'S EVENTS

Coffee Evening

Friday November 8th, 8.00pm
Lower Hall, Millennium Centre, Rainham
Bring and Buy, Tombola, Cards and Gifts, Donations of gifts much appreciated, Raffle and Christmas Buffet
Admission £3.50, Children £1
(Refreshments included)

Quiz Night

Saturday 7th December, 7.00 for 7.30pm start
Twydall Church Hall, Gillingham
Teams of up to 8 - £5 per person. Bring your own drinks and nibbles, Free Tea, Coffee and biscuits
Charity Raffle, Feel free to come and make up a table
For both events ring 01634 233405 or 01634 375486

MEDWAY EVACUEES CLUB

FAME - Families and Associates of Medway Evacuees - Now open to new members (not necessarily evacuees) who wish to make friends
Wednesday 13th November, 2.00pm
St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham,
A performance by keyboard player Keith Pilbrow.
Entry £1.50 Entertainment, refreshments and raffle
For further information please contact
Sharon Evans (FAME Sec) 01634 372189

APPLAUSE RURAL TOURING THEATRE

Friday, November 15th, 7.30pm
Bredhurst Village Hall
Something completely different when Vimala leads the Baker Boys for an Evening of Vintage Jazz that will transport you from blues to swing, and from the riverboats of New Orleans to the hip jazz joints of New York
Tickets £8.50 from Ann Keeble 01634 361263

HEMPSTEAD CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Saturday, 16th November, 11.30am - 3.30pm.
See Father Christmas arrive in style at 11.45am and then visit him in his magical grotto. Light lunches, mulled wine, mince pies and cakes served in the Church. Many Christmas gift, craft and games stalls in the Village Hall. Proceeds to be shared by All Saints' Church and Hempstead good causes.
Lighting Hempstead Christmas Tree
Saturday, 23rd November, 6.30pm opposite the pub and shops in Hempstead Road. Salvation Army and carols round the tree. Trolley for donations of toiletries for elderly care wards at Medway Maritime Hospital - all gratefully received.

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"MUSICAL FEAST" by Bearsted Choral Society
Saturday 16th November, 7.30pm
St Margaret's Church, Rainham
What a treat! Come to hear choruses from Phantom of the Opera, Les Miserables, West Side Story, My Fair Lady and The Lion King. This concert follows the mood of our sell-out "swing" concert in July. Tickets £5 in advance from 01634 230183 or £6 on the door on the night.

BABY MASSAGE COURSE

November 18th & 25th, 2nd December
10.00 - 11.00am, St Paul's Church, Parkwood
£5 for entire course, To enrol contact
Elaine Wheeler 01634 379360
or email baby massage@the139club.co.uk

CRAFT FAIR

Saturday November 23rd, 1.30 - 4.00pm
Rainham Methodist Church Hall
(corner of Station Road Wakeley Road)
Admission 30p, Refreshments available
Please contact Ruth 01634 389502 for details.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

The Friends of Bredhurst Cats Protection Bredhurst Adoption Centre at Matts Hill are holding their annual Bazaar at St Matthews Church Hall, Drewery Drive, Wigmore on Saturday November 23rd, doors open at 11.00am. The stalls will include Bric-a-Brac, Tombola, Christmas cards, Calendars, Diaries etc Entrance is 50p and light refreshments will be served, for details ring 01634 232471

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE

Meredale Independent Primary School
Sunday 24th November 12noon - 3.00pm.
Lots of fantastic festive stalls from both the PTA and craft traders. Raffle, Tombola, refreshments etc and even a visit from Father Christmas.

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Diary 2013

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: 19th November

November 2nd - Grand Autumn Bazaar, St. Margaret's Church, Rainham, 10.00am - 2.30pm, Millennium Centre. Entrance 50p Details Maggie M. 01795 475907
November 2nd - Upchurch Family Fireworks, Westmoor Farm, Gates open 5.30pm, £5 under 16, £7 adult, £20 Family Ticket (2 plus 2 under 16) Car parking fee,
November 2nd - Medway Folk Dance Club, 7.30 - 10.00pm United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. New /experienced dancers welcome, with or without a partner, 01634 366189 or 388546.
November 3rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Andy Boorman 07881 933358 Hoo St Werburgh car park corner Church Street & Stoke Road 4.5 mile flat walk along sea wall & farmland, No dogs.
November 3rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Graham 07989 753278, 10.00am, Camer Country Park near Sole Street for a 5 mile fairly flat walk with some good views on a clear day, Pub at end with lunches available.
November 3rd - Centre of Mind Body & Spirit, Farthing Corner M2 Services, Service 6.30pm, Francis Stadden
November 4th - Parkwood Leisure Club, St Paul's Church, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Famous and Infamous Ladies in Kent, new members welcome, ring 01634 366056
November 4th - Rainham Wives, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, 8.00pm, 'Military Medals' illustrated talk and valuations by Glenn Jones, New members welcome, £1.50 visit, details ring Sue 01634 230639.
November 5th - GHS Floral Art Group, 7.30pm United Reformed Church, Balmoral Road, Gillingham, Fireworks - a Polychromatic arrangement, ring 232998
November 5th - Dementia Café, St Paul's Church, Long Catlis Road, 1.00 - 3.00pm, friendly and supportive meeting place for. Everyone welcome, free refreshments information Sylvia Wolfson 07557 111060 or email sylvia.wolfson@alzheimers.org.uk
November 6th - Rainham Horticultural Society, Talk - Vertical Gardening - wall shrubs & climbers, Steve Bradley, 7.30pm Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane. New members welcome, ring 366276 for details.
November 7th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Musical

Entertainment by Kingfisher Singers, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, for over 50s, ring 01634 235507 for details.

November 7th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Village Hall, behind All Saints Church, Theatrical Tales, 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome ring 01634 366907.
November 8th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham, meets every Friday 9.45am - 12noon to help people who have lost a loved one, join us for cuppa and chat ring Julie 01634 364309
November 8th - Bamardo's Festive Coffee Evening, 8.00pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, Admission £3.50, Children £1 Tickets from Committee members 01634 233405, 01634 375486 or on the door.
November 8th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History Society, Byron School, Gillingham, 7.15pm, Victorian Doctors - Toni Mount, details Ron Baker 01634 854982
November 9th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Bluebell Hill picnic site ME5 9RG for a 11 miles walking the North Downs Way (section 8)
November 9th - Upchurch Choral Society, Remembrance Day Concert, 7.30pm, St. Mary's Church, Upchurch, Tickets £5 on door, or Liz Walters 01634 361897,
November 10th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Mike 07855 929404, 10.00am, Higham Railway Station - free parking, for 7.5 mile very flat walk, Bring snack
November 10th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Gill Smith 01622 710569 Yalding Café, Hampstead Lane for 5 mile fairly flat walk, No dogs.
November 10th - Riverside Country Park & Capstone Farm Country Park, Volunteer Task Day 10.00am - 2.00pm Refreshments Details 01634 337432 or 338191
November 10th - Ranscombe Farm Reserve, Conservation Day 10.00am - 3.00pm Please wear suitable clothes and sturdy footwear, and bring a packed lunch. Meet main car park A228, just south M2, 01634 292062 or email ranscombe@plantlife.org.uk

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November 10th - Finding Fungi - Martin Allison, Meet at the Knights Place Recreation Ground car park, off Albatross Avenue, Strood, 01634 292062 or email ranscombe@plantlife.org.uk for details
November 11th - Monday Hub, St Pauls Church, Parkwood, 10.00am - 12.30pm, light refreshments, conversation, games All welcome ring 01634 230780
November 11th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Bingo, (4th Nov)
November 11th - Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, alternate Mondays 2.00 - 4.30pm details 01634 230500
November 11th - Medway Organ Club Concert, 2nd Monday of each month, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30 - 10.00pm, ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694
November 11th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham, meets 2nd Monday evening each month to help people still in employment who have lost a loved one, join us for a cuppa and chat ring Julie 01634 364309 for details.
November 11th - Rainham Wives, Silent Auction for our Charity, (see 4th Nov).
November 12th - Silver Surfers: Rainham School for Girls, 3.15 - 4.00pm, free of charge, one-to-one help Contact Mrs K Moon, kmoon@rsg.org.uk to book, or 01634 362746 for more information
November 12th - Medway Antique and Collectors' Club, Military Medals including the Zulu Wars, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 7.30 for 8.00pm all visitors most welcome. Miss E Boyes 0147 482 3606
November 13th - Medway Evacuees Club, 2.00pm Millennium Centre, Rainham, A performance by keyboard player Keith Pilbrow, all welcome £1.50 per person, ring 01634 372189 for details.
November 13th - Rainham Flower Club, Upchurch Village Hall, 7.30pm, Demonstration by Lee Burrill For details ring 01795 472973 or 01634 863034
November 13th - East Medway U3A Meeting 2.00pm, Rainham Mark Social Club, Guest Speaker Robin Alexander - Serv Kent Rider, details 0789 589 0635.
November 13th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Boots No 7 Pamper Evening - Angela, details Rhonda Peck 07951 629444
November 13th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall, Avicé Harms - Village Signs, Medway Valley to Wrotham, ring 01634 389966 for more details.
November 14th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Games, Tea and Chat, (see 7th Nov).
November 14th - Wigmore Thursday Club, The Victoria Palace Hotel, Dean Caston, (see 7th Nov).
November 14th - Donn Barcott's Five 5 Live, 8.30pm 44Two Club Featherby Road, Elaine Diane (Vocals) admission £6 all welcome, details 01634 405037
November 15th - Applause Rural Touring Theatre, Evening of Vintage Jazz, Bredhurst Village Hall, 7.30pm, Tickets £8.50 from Ann Keeble 01634 361263
November 15th - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Simon Bates/ Harry Harris Quartet. Admission £10, E01634 365352
November 15th - 70's & 80's Party Night in aid of 'Hounds for Heroes', 7.30pm, 44Two club, Featherby Road, Gillingham. Tickets £12 must be bought in advance from 01634 376608 or 07711 346171.
November 16th - Craft and Produce Fair, Millennium Centre 9.00am - 12.30pm supporting St. Margaret's Church, Free entry to the public.
November 16th - Hempstead Christmas Fayre, Village Hall and Church, Hempstead Road, 11.30am - 3.30 pm.
November 16th - Quiz Night, Holy Trinity Church, Rainham, 7.15pm start, Teams of up to 8, £5 pp, bring own drinks /nibbles, information ring 01634 377671
November 16th - Bearsted Choral Society, "Musical Feast", 7.30pm, St Margaret's Church, Rainham Tickets £5 in advance from 01634 230183, £6 on the door
November 16th - City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra 7.30pm, Central Theatre, Chatham, Britten/Rossini, Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky and Rachmaninov, Tickets £16-£10 01634 338338, or tickets.medway.gov.uk
November 16th - Quiz Night, Oasthouse Community Centre, 7.30pm, Admission £2, Members £1.50, Rolls available 60p, details 01634 710553
November 16th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (2nd Nov).
November 16th - Instep Dancing, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, 8.00 - 11.00pm, Ballroom - Latin - Sequence dancing, Enquiries 01634 363738 email s.colins02@btinternet.com
November 17th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Lindsay Floyd and Margaret Norman 07743 702049, 07780 517785 Sandwich pay and display car park at the Quay beside the River Stour near the bridge for a 5.5 mile mainly flat walk, No dogs.
November 17th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Frank/Mim 10.00am, Upchurch Golf Club, Oak Lane for a 5 mile pleasant circular walk.

Continued on Page 11

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CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Deanwood Primary School

Friday, 29th November, 3.15 - 5.30pm

Entrance Adults 50p, Children 30p, Pre school - free
 Have your photograph taken with Father Christmas
 Tombolas, games, craft, raffle, books, gifts, home
 made cakes and more! Refreshments available
 including sausages, chips and mince pies!

FRIENDS OF BERENGRAVE

Friday 29th November, 7.00pm

Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham

'My Lost Kent' A talk by Peter Kirby of the
 Kent Butterfly Conservation Trust
 FoB members free, £2 for guests.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR

St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow

Saturday 30th November, Noon - 3.00pm

Join us for a wide range of crafts, gifts and home
 baking. Refreshments available

Christmas Market 'The Three Tuns' PH, noon - 4pm
 Winter Tea Room aboard the "Edith May" Thames
 Sailing Barge, 10.00am to 4.00pm.

HARTLIP VILLAGE CHRISTMAS FAIR

Saturday 30th November, 10.00am - 2.00pm

Hartlip Village Hall, Wide variety of stalls
 Refreshments and light lunches served all day

CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

Bredhurst Woodland Action Group

Thursday 5th December, 7.30pm

St Peter's Church, Hurstwood Road &
 Green Court, The Street, Bredhurst
 Featuring the Cantium Singers, and mulled wine,
 mince pies & grand Christmas raffle at Green Court
 Tickets - £6 per person, u16s free (includes
 refreshments) must be purchased in advance - Not
 available on the night For information and tickets
 call Vanessa Jones on 07813 785940 (eve/weekends)
 or email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com

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CHRISTMAS GIFT FAIR

Medway Charities Together

Saturday 7th December, 9.30am - 12.30pm

St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham Seasonal
 Gift Sellers, Refreshments, Children's Activities, a
 Christmas Hamper Raffle and a Tombola.
 Entry is free.

To book a stall for £10 call 01634 819649.

www.facebook.com/medwaycharitiestogether.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Saturday 7th December, 2.00 - 4.00pm

Bredhurst Village Hall.

Attractions include Father Christmas in his grotto,
 £5 Gift Stall, crafts, children's free activity, mask
 competition, excellent homemade cakes, grand raffle
 and refreshments. The charity shop next to the hall
 will also be open from 1.30pm.

Entry is 50 pence for adults and free for under 15's.

CHARITY BARN DANCE

In aid of HANDS & Gillingham Volunteer Centre

Saturday 7th December, 7.00 for a 7.30pm start

Parkwood Primary School, Deanwood Drive

Tickets £8 per person; Light supper included; bring
 your own drinks

Lively dancing, with caller; fun guaranteed!

For tickets, call Ann or Wendy on 01634 815430
 or 07816 159668

COME AND SING CHRISTMAS 2013

Raising Funds for

Children's Hospice Holidays

Sunday 8th December

Rehearsal 3.00pm, Concert 7.30pm

St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, Wigmore

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR OCTOBER

In October I visited Boxley (which is on the road to Maidstone via Bredhurst) in search of the colours of the leaves and berries of autumn. Having parked my car between Boxley Church and the King's Arms, I took the footpath along the north wall of the churchyard. As I approached an old and very impressive beech tree, the autumn sunshine fell on its foliage of gold, orange and purple leaves. Under the tree was a carpet of fallen beech masts. Very soon I picked up the Centenary Way Walk which heads in the direction of Maidstone and through parkland to the east of the village. Sheep and beef cattle were grazing in the fields and rooks were searching there for grubs and worms.

Once I reached Boxley Road, on the approach to Penenden Heath, I crossed over the road into Grange Lane, which is ancient in origin and which leads to Sandling. Some of the present lane consists of a new diversion, created as a result of the building of the M20. However, there is a quarter mile long, gently winding length at the Boxley Road end which remains much as it was before the age of the motor car. This end of the lane is overlooked, to the south, in the direction of Maidstone, by the fields of a small farm at Harbourland, at which are kept sheep, geese, ducks and hens. In one recent summer, I watched a sheep shearing match there, organised by the Romney Sheep Breeders Society. The lane is bounded to the north, in the direction of the North Downs, by Boxley Brook. Where the brook emerges from a concrete culvert under Boxley Road, I was both delighted and surprised to catch sight of three brown trout. I was surprised because the brook is a shadow of its former self, as a result of the pumping of water from aquifers above Boxley village.

Grange Lane is lined with thirteen species of tree, including, ash, beech, English elm, field maple, horse chestnut, oak, sweet chestnut and sycamore. In the spring, bluebell, primrose, greater stitchwort, lesser celandine and wood anemone are in bloom on the grass verges of the lane. These flowering plant species are a strong indication that Grange Lane was

originally created as a track through woodland. The leaves of most of the trees in the lane had turned yellow by the time of my visit, and the most spectacular colours were those of the leaves of the field maple; they were largely golden yellow, but some were turning scarlet.

I headed back to the village green via the new alignment of Boxley Road, below which runs the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. It came as no surprise to me that what is a relatively new road had such a magnificent display of autumn colour, for I had long been aware of the species of tree and shrub that the highway authority had planted there. There were the red berries or leaves of dogwood, spindle, wayfaring tree and guelder rose. Also on display were the black berries of privet, the luscious-looking blue berries of blackthorn (sloes) and the pink flowers with brilliant orange seeds of the spindle.

I stood for a while on the highest part of the new road. I had views of Boxley village ahead of me and of the North Downs on the horizon. The trees growing on the escarpment of the downs were of various hues. I could make out the dark green leaves of the yew and, blowing in the wind, the white undersides of the leaves of whitebeam. Doubtless those whitebeams would be laden with bright red berries. There were a number of deciduous trees sporting yellow leaves, perhaps mainly beech but also, presumably, some wild cherry. Richard Mabey, the author of "Flora Britannica", considers that the wild cherry is the most seasonally ornamental of all our native woodland trees. Drifts of delicate white blossom appear in spring. The tree's fruits, which are small and can be yellow, red or black, ripen in the summer. These diminutive cherries are popular with birds and small mammals and piles of stones can sometimes be found on tree stumps where mice or squirrels have been feeding. In autumn the leaves of the wild cherry turn a fiery mix of yellow and crimson.

I decided to make a quick visit to that part of the escarpment known as Boxley Wood. Having walked through the village, I turned right into Styles Lane upon reaching the red brick water pumping station, crossed over Pilgrims Way and entered the wood. I knew where there was a tall, wild cherry tree, not far

into the wood. As I expected, the leaves of the tree were all a rich yellow colour but I was pleased to see that many were diffused with pink and some had begun to turn red. I sat there for a while, on a log, taking in the sights, sounds and smells of the wood. The diversion from my planned walk had been well worthwhile. A cherry on the cake, as it were!

Joe Ennis

OASTHOUSE THEATRE

In November the Oasthouse Theatre, home of the Rainham Theatrical Society, celebrates 50 years since it first opened to the public on 8th November 1963. The society will be celebrating this milestone with an anniversary dinner at Hempstead House, a gala reception and a performance of 'Much Ado About Nothing' on 8th November and an anniversary variety show on 22nd & 23rd November which will feature excerpts and music from some of the memorable productions performed over the past 50 years. Our charming and intimate Grade II listed building seats 72 and has a licensed bar and tea bar. The society now performs 6 main productions a year and the season opens with a traditional pantomime. This is always popular with audiences and local Scout and Brownie groups return each year to cheer the goodies and boo the baddies! Demand for matinee tickets has increased over recent years and to meet this the group has put in an extra matinee at 11am on one of the Saturdays meaning they perform 4 shows in one day! In January 2014 they will be performing 'Cinderella' so make sure you book your seats early.

Over the years many improvements have been made. When the theatre first opened members had to light gas lamps each evening, empty the Elson toilets in the main sewer once a week and climb a ladder to reach the backstage area. Things have come a long way since then! We now have electricity, central heating, flushing toilets and a staircase to the backstage area. The Green Room and foyer have recently been refurbished and plans are underway for the upstairs foyer. The Green Room was originally named the TOC-H Room in honour of the members of the TOC-H Association who installed the spring floor in 1964. Over the years there have been more than 300 productions at the theatre including classics such as 'Blithe Spirit', 'The Importance of Being Earnest' and 'An Inspector Calls'. In recent years stage versions of TV spin offs have been popular with audiences and

excerpts from 'Allo 'Allo and 'Dads Army' will both feature in the anniversary variety show in November. Our latest production 'Darling Buds of May' played to capacity houses and turned out to be a perfect production! Over the years the society has won many awards in the Kent Drama Festival and this year three of our actresses received awards.

The Society also has a thriving Youth Group (Ratlets) who will be performing 'Much Ado About Nothing' from 7th - 9th & 14th - 16th November. The RaTS Revellers have provided a variety of entertainment around the County since 1998 and performed over 250 shows for local groups and organisations. Despite being in existence for 50 years there are still many people who have yet to discover the delights of this charming theatre. So if you haven't already paid us a visit do come along or if you are one of our regular supporters we look forward to seeing you at our anniversary celebrations.

For more information about the theatre visit our website at www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

Dean Caston

RAINHAM CRICKET CLUB Development Fund

Running a Community based sports and cricket club is expensive. The maintenance costs of specialist equipment, fertiliser and seeding all adds up and has to be done by a trained and qualified workforce. The Rainham crew are probably the oldest swingers in town but all credit to them for the way they maintain the pitch and outfield. This is financed from our annual income.

When larger capital sums are required we have no alternative but to approach the authorities: Medway Council, Sport England, KCB and ECB for help. A new Community Pavilion and car park are urgently required and are included in our development plans. Over the years Medway and local schools have cut sport and cricket facilities to the bone. We have a thriving youth section and good adult membership and so far the club has been able to meet the demands placed upon it.

Sadly we have to report that in August Sport England rejected our application for funding at the last hurdle, our need was not considered as great as others, so we now have to try again next year. With assistance we hope to make a stronger application and in the meantime we continue with our local fundraising.

Keith Chambers - Fund Co-ordinator

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Diary 2013

- November 18th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Send a Cow - April Grady, (see 4th Nov).
November 18th - Rainham Wives, 'An Evening with Barbara' talk by Barbara Stevens, (see 4th Nov).
November 18th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, 7.30pm, Millennium Centre, Christopher Hare talk 'Forty Years without a Proper Job, competition - Brooches, ring 01634 262577 for more details.
November 18th - Wigmore WI, Mary Douglas - Boxley Handbells, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, 7.30pm, Visitors welcome, Ring 01634 263405
November 18th - 25th & December 2nd - Baby Massage Course, 10.00 - 11.00am St Paul's Church, Parkwood, £5 for entire course, To enrol Elaine Wheeler 01634 379360 or email baby massage@the139club.co.uk
November 19th - Silver Surfers (see 12th Nov).
November 19th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.45pm £3.00. Little Owl - Ian Rumley-Dawson, For Walks see www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.
November 19th - Dementia Café, (see 5th Nov).
November 19th - GHS Floral Art Group, Stand Tall - a vertical arrangement, (see 5th Nov).
November 20th - HempstARA Hempstead Active Retirement Scout Hall, Duke's Meadow Drive, 2.00pm.
November 20th - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Village Hall, illustrated talk 'Work of the Air Ambulance' with Gift Stall, new members welcome ring 01634 233554
November 20th - Wigmore Lecture, John E. Vigar - Murder, Sex & Mayhem in English Churches, 8.00pm, Tickets £3.75, Wigmore Library, 01634 337799
November 21st - Woodcraft Workshop: Hurdle Making, 9.30am - 4.00pm, ranscombe@plantlife.org.uk or 01634 292062 for details
November 21st - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 - 4.00pm, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Mingle Meeting, Visitors welcome for small entry charge per visit. Ring 01634 366276 for details

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- November 21st - Hempstead Leisure Club, Winds of Change, (see 7th Nov).
November 21st - Wigmore Thursday Club, A First Class Hobby, Paul Warren, (see 7th Nov).
November 22nd - Centre of Mind Body & Spirit, Clairvoyant Evening, Karen Willis (see 3rd Nov).
November 22nd - Medway Geographical Society, Byron Primary School, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.00pm, 'Ley Lines' - Doug Chapman, Everyone welcome, come on the evening or contact Pat Meredith 01634 362683
November 23rd - Capstone Farm Country Park, Hedge Planting 10.00am - 1.00pm Help the rangers plant and create new hedgerows, Hot refreshments provided £2 per person. Details 01634 338191
November 23rd - Craft Fair, 1.30 - 4.00pm, Rainham Methodist Church Hall, Admission 30p, Refreshments, Stalls available - £8 each, contact Ruth 01634 389502
November 23rd - Father Christmas is coming to Lower Halstow Memorial Hall, 11.00 - 2.00pm.
November 23rd - Lighting of Hempstead Christmas Tree, 6.30pm opposite the pub, Hempstead Road. Trolley for donations of toiletries for elderly care wards at Medway Maritime Hospital - all gratefully received.
November 23rd - Friends of Bredhurst Christmas Bazaar, St Matthews Church Hall, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. In aid of Cats Protection Bredhurst, Entrance 50p. Doors open at 11.00am., details 01634 232471
November 23rd - GHS Floral Art Group, Christmas Show, United Reformed Church, Balmoral Road, Gillingham, ring 232998 for details.
November 24th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Graham 07989 753278 10.00am Hollingbourne railway station. Bring picnic lunch. Pub at end with lunches available.
November 24th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet David Barnes 07522 937953 Grove Ferry car park (£1.70 fee Sundays) for a 6 mile circular flat route via Stourmouth and Preston, No dogs.
November 24th - Riverside Country Park, Hedge Planting (see 23rd Nov) 01634 337432
November 24th - Christmas Craft and Food Fair, Newington Village Hall, 11.00am - 4.00pm, for details ring 01795 844949

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November 24th - Meredale Independent Primary School,
Christmas Craft, 12noon - 3.00pm. 01634 231405
November 24th - Upchurch Farmers Market, 10.00am -
1.00pm, Upchurch Village Hall, Andrea 01634 361040
November 25th - Monday Hub, (see 11th Nov).
November 25th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Conundrum,
(see 4th Nov).
November 25th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 11th Nov).
November 25th - Rainham Wives, 'How to Take Better
Photographs' illustrated talk Chris Wade, (4th Nov).
November 26th - Silver Surfers (see 12th Nov).
November 26th - Tea and cakes with Derwent Way
PACT group, 7.00 - 8.00pm, Rainham Girls' School.
local residents welcome, ljohnson8@blueyonder.co.uk
November 27th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
Christmas Meal - King Charles Hotel, details contact
Rhonda Peck 07951 629444
November 28th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Games, Tea
and Chat, (see 7th Nov).
November 28th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service
followed by "Fair Trade", (see 7th Nov).
November 29th - Cash Bingo, Lower Halstow Memorial
Hall, 1.00 - 3.00pm, Free to enter, cards £1 each
November 29th - Christmas Fayre, Deanwood Primary
School, 3.15 - 5.30pm, Entrance Adults 50p, Children
30p, Preschool - free.
November 29th - Friends of Berengrave, 7.00pm,
Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, 'My Lost Kent'
talk by Peter Kirby - Kent Butterfly Conservation Trust

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November 30th - MTFG 10.00am, meet Stephen Manning
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for a 9 miles walking the North Downs Way (section 9)
November 30th - Christmas Craft Fair, St. Margaret's
Church, Lower Halstow, 12noon to 3.00pm
November 30th - Hartlip Village Christmas Fair, 10.00am
- 2.00pm, Hartlip Village Hall, Wide variety of stalls
November 30th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside,
7.30pm, ring Sylvia Wildridge 01634 312038
December 1st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet Stephen Manning, 07551 712438
Upchurch Golf Club (Christmas Lunch Walk) for a 4.5
easy pre lunch walk, coffee stop en route, No dogs.
December 1st - Centre of Mind Body & Spirit, M2
Services, Sunday Service 6.30pm, Anne Germain
December 5th - BWAG, Christmas Carol Concert,
7.30pm St Peter's Church & Green Court, The Street,
Bredhurst, Tickets - £6pp, in advance call 07813
785940 or email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com
December 7th - Christmas Fayre 2.00 - 4.00pm,
Bredhurst Village Hall, Entry 50p adults, free under 15.
December 7th - Barnardo's Quiz Night, 7.30pm start,
Twydall Church Hall, Teams up to 8 - £5 pp Bring
own drinks/nibbles, phone 01634 233405 or 375486
December 7th - Charity Barn Dance, In aid of HANDS
7.30pm start, Parkwood Primary School, Tickets £8 pp
For tickets, call 01634 815430 or 07816 159668
December 8th - Come and Sing Christmas Raising Funds
for Children's Hospice Holidays, St Matthew's Church,
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