

ACTION FORUM

DECEMBER 2013
NUMBER 494

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



We Wish You a Happy Christmas



The Brethren, wives and children of the 'Pride of Rainham' Lodge (No 7235) of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes G.L.E. annual Christmas party in the Co-op Hall, above the High Street Cooperative Store opposite the church, in 1949. This picture appeared in The Chatham Observer on December 23rd. Mrs Hilda Matthews (nee Latty) is second on the left sitting on the floor at the age of 3 years. Her parents James and Alice Latty with sister Cynthia and brother Jim are also in the picture as is Margaret Barlow who in 1951 married Jim. The 'Buffis' as the organisation was called met every Friday in Rainham Social Club, Station Road (now Rainham Cabs). Although the Buffis still exists nationally we do not know of any local branch - unless you know differently!

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AF
 Next Issue January 18th 2014
 Copy Date: Jan 7th Sm Ads Jan 10th
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Editorial

At this time of year when we are full of excitement and anticipation for the forthcoming festivities and in the mood for giving charities make their appeals hoping to raise enough money to keep afloat and continue their work for another twelve months. The British public are extremely generous even contributing record sums to 'Children in Need' immediately following the urgent appeals for financial help in the Philippines following the recent natural disasters. Many of our readers also contribute indirectly by giving their time to help with the voluntary distribution of Action Forum. The money that we save by this help enables us to give away our surplus to charity. Once again we have sent £1,500 to St Margaret's Church, Rainham and the Parish of South Gillingham to use as they think best and the Kajiado Development Trust, who are building more water storage tanks in Kenya, these truly do provide the 'water of life' in arid areas of the country and are much appreciated. This brings the total we have donated since the Millennium to £32,550. Thank you everyone who helps each month – and has done over the years – in July 2014 we will be producing our five hundredth edition!

Our contents this month are of course dominated by Christmas events. Sales and Fayres occupy the first Saturday of December after which the organisers, who are mostly parents of young children, are too busy with their own arrangements but then the churches take over and remind us of the real reason for all the celebration. We include details of Carol Concerts, Christingle and Christmas Services for some churches but many more will be taking place in our area, so do take a look at your church notice board and if you wish spare an hour to pop along to a local service – you will be made very welcome.

Pantomime is traditionally a part of our Christmas entertainment and this month we include the childhood memories of John Samson on the subject. This year the Oasthouse Theatre are producing Cinderella – surely the most evocative story of all, much loved by little girls but equally suitable for macho boys. If you have never been to a performance by the Oasthouse Theatre perhaps now is the time as they approach the end of the 50th anniversary year. Whatever you do have a wonderful Christmas – get out for a walk to burn off some of those calories if the weather is good – and we will see you again in the

middle of January 2014 with our combined January / February edition.

Correspondence

CAROL SERVICE

Dear Editor

Please could we, through Action Forum, invite people to Rainham Bereavement Friendship Groups Carol Service on Sunday 15th December at St Peters Church, Bredhurst at 3.30pm. It is a simple service of Readings and Carols with the chance for any one to light a candle for their loved one if they would like. Children are very welcome. For any further details please contact Julie on 01634 364309.

Yours sincerely
 Julie Sharp

UNUSED DRESSINGS

Dear Editor

My colleague Joyce Mitchell based in Strood (mobile 07587 778382) acts for a charity called Jacobs Well. They would like any unused dressings even though they may be out of date for use as part of overseas aid. Currently these items are being dumped and chemists will not pass them on if they are handed in. In some countries it's the difference between using a piece of rag and a donated dressing.

Yours sincerely
 John Colam
 email john@colam.co.uk

HELP TO INSPIRE BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS

Dear Editor,

This is an plea to local businesspeople to help in giving our 16-17 year-olds the opportunity to gain real business experience and improve their business understanding.

I'm a Business Advisor with Young Enterprise. From its beginnings in Chatham in 1963, Young Enterprise is now the UK's largest business and enterprise education charity. Every year 250,000 young people aged between 4 and 25 learn about business and the world of work in schools, colleges and universities. In Young Enterprise's flagship Company Programme, some 30,000 15-19 year olds run their own real companies for a year. They 'learn by doing', under the guidance of a network of volunteer Business Advisors. Many of the scheme's alumni have gone on to outstanding business success.

Each Business Advisor works with a single company (with 6 - 25 participants but usually averaging about 10-12) to provide the knowledge and skills of how business works – but without getting in the way of letting the participants learn by doing it themselves, and by making mistakes. It can often be demanding, and sometimes frustrating, but is always rewarding. The growth of Young Enterprise in the Maidstone and Medway area means we need more Business Advisors. The role suits both recent retirees with business management experience, and business managers looking to add a new dimension to their

experience. There's more information at www.young-enterprise.org.uk/support-us/volunteer/what-volunteering-involves/

If you think this might suit you, or you know of anyone (retired or working) who might be interested, contact me on 01634 389079 for more information.

David Kirk
 Business Advisor Liaison

LIONS CLUB APPEAL

The Lions Club of Gillingham are about to lose the garage in which we store our Christmas sleigh and are looking for a garage/storage facility in the Rainham or Gillingham area where we could house it when it is not being used. If you are able to help please contact Chris Iles on 01634 373840.

TALKING TOTS

We are hoping to start a new class at St Margaret's Millennium Centre, on Monday mornings, called 'Talking Tots', to help pre-school children with their language skills, development of confidence and to pave the way for school. If you are interested please contact the office on 01634 374038 Monday - Friday between 9.00am – 1.00pm for more information.

CHRISTMAS ART FAIR

Cobbler Elf Gallery Christmas Art Fair, Saturday 14th December - mulled wine and mince pies and a range of affordable contemporary art; meet and greet the artists from 2.00pm. Find the most unique and original gift in Medway this Christmas. New work on show for December with gallery open Monday - Saturday from 9.00am to 6.00pm. Gallery at 16 Station Rd, Rainham, 01634 386381 email Cobblerelf@hotmail.co.uk or find us on Facebook.

'CHRISTMAS MADNESS'

Wigmore MADS annual Christmas Concert
 Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore
 Saturday 14th December, 8.00pm
 Tickets £6 (£5 concessions) from Sue 01634 370639.

HEMPSTEAD VALLEY CAROL CONCERT

Sunday 15th December, from 4.45pm
 Sing your favourite carols with school children and members of local churches, accompanied by the Medway Band. All ages and faiths are welcome. The centre will be open exclusively for the carol concert with all stores closed during the event. The Medway Band will be playing outside the centre (Argos' main entrance) all day on Sunday 15th December.

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CAROL CONCERT

Rainham Ladies Choir with The UK Paper Band
 Saturday 21st December, 7.30pm
 The Royal Dockyard Church, Chatham
 Raffle and refreshments in aid of
 Marie Curie Cancer Care
 Tickets £7 adults, £3 children under 12
 Ring 01634 370797 or 613715 or email
 secretary@rainhamladieschoir.org.uk

CHRISTMAS AT ST MARGARET'S RAINHAM

December 16th - 21st Christmas Tree Festival
 December 22nd - Carols by Candlelight 6.30pm
 December 24th - Christmas Eve Crib Services
 1.30 and 4.00pm
 Midnight Mass 11.30pm with Carol Singing from
 11.00pm
 December 25th - Christmas Day Family Communion
 9.30am

BEEKEEPING COURSE

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 for 10 weeks commencing 18th January
 Methodist Church Hall, Station Road, Rainham
 Further details from Pat Clare 01634 233748
 or patclare89@me.com

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

For those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, the support group starts on
 Wednesday 22nd January, 1.00pm
 Wigmore Evangelical Free Church, Durham Road,
 This is a 13 week series
 Contact 01634 788546 or 07986 699785
 for further information

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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: 7th January

- December 7th - Christmas Fayre, Miers Court PTFa
11.00am - 2.00pm, Everyone welcome.
- December 7th - Christmas Fayre 2.00 - 4.00pm,
Bredhurst Village Hall, Entry 50p adults, free under 15.
- December 7th - Christmas Gift Fair, Medway Charities
Together, 9.30am - 12.30pm, St Margaret's
Millennium Centre, details 01634 819649
- December 7th - Medway Singers Carol Concert, St
Augustine's Catholic Church, 7.30pm, Admission £5
- December 7th - Barnardo's Quiz Night, 7.30pm start,
Twydall Church Hall, 01634 233405
- December 7th - Charity Barn Dance, In aid of HANDS,
7.30pm, Parkwood School, £8 pp 01634 815430
- December 7th - Medway Folk Dance Club, 7.30 -
10.00pm, Christmas Dance, United Reformed Church
Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. New / experienced
dancers welcome, with or without a partner, for details
ring 01634 366189 or 388546.
- December 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Mike,
10.00am car park near Wrotham church. TQ611592
TN15 7AR 5 mile short gradual uphill, food at end.
- December 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet John Trebill 01634 244045 Bluebell Hill
picnic site for 6 mile easy walk through Nashenden
Valley, one steep climb, good views, Dogs allowed.
- December 8th - Come and Sing Christmas Raising Funds
for Children's Hospice Holidays, St Matthew's Church,
Wigmore Rehearsal 3.00pm, Concert 7.30pm details
Ann Livings 01634 379139 aap@livings.eclipse.co.uk
- December 9th - Monday Hub, St Pauls Church,
Parkwood, 10.00am - 12.30pm, light refreshments,
conversation, games etc. All welcome 01634 230780
- December 9th - Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens
Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, alternate
Mondays 2.00 - 4.30pm details 01634 230500
- December 9th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Carol Service -
St Mathews, 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome
ring 01634 366056 or 373594 for details.
- December 9th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh Run,
Hempstead (Barncroft to Kingsdown), 6.00 - 8.15pm

- December 9th - Medway Organ Club Concert, Parkwood
Community Centre, 7.00pm for 7.30, finishing 10.00pm
For more details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694
- December 9th - Rainham Wives, Methodist Church Hall,
Wakeley Road, Rainham 8.00pm, Christmas Quiz,
Carols and Mince Pies, New members welcome, £1.50
per visit includes refreshments, details 01634 230639.
- December 9th - Wigmore WI, Christmas Meeting, 4th
birthday party and entertainment, St Matthew's
Community Centre, Drewery Drive, 7.30pm, Visitors
welcome, Ring 01634 263405 for details.
- December 9th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group,
Millennium Centre, Rainham, 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
- December 10th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Hempstead (Coppergate to Everglades) 6 - 8.15pm
- December 11th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Mike,
9.30am commuter car park, just north of Bredhurst.
TQ799629 ME8 0LU for a 8 mile to Maidstone - Linear
(Bus Pass) walk mainly down hill, Bring snack, plenty
of pubs or cafes in Maidstone. Don't forget Bus Pass
- December 11th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Run, Fairview area 6.00 - 8.15pm
- December 11th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall,
Wilf Lower - Behind the scenes of TV's Golden Years,
ring 01634 389966 for more details.
- December 11th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Christmas at Home,
details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444
- December 12th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Carols and
Readings for Christmas, St Matthew's Community
Centre, 2.00pm, for over 50s, ring 01634 235507.
- December 12th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Village
Hall, behind All Saints Church, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Games,
Tea and Chat, new members welcome 01634 366907.
- December 12th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Run, Parkwood (Campleshon to Beke) 6.00 - 8.15pm

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- December 13th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Run, Parkwood (Capel to Sedley) 6.00 - 8.15pm
- December 13th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship
Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham, every Friday
9.45am - 12noon to help people who have lost a loved
one, join us for a cuppa and chat ring 01634 364309.
- December 13th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History
Society, Byron School, Byron Road, Gillingham,
7.15pm, Civil War Film, information 01634 854982
- December 13th - Christmas Fayre, Parents and Friends of
Holywell School, Upchurch, 2.00 - 4.30pm, Traditional
Stalls plus Pupils Enterprise Initiative, Draw tickets
50p, all welcome do come and join in the fun
- December 14th - Rainham South Councillors' Surgery,
Parkwood Community Centre from 9.30am - 12 noon.
No appointment necessary.
- December 14th - Cobbler Elf Gallery 16 Station Road,
Rainham, Christmas Art Fair, meet artists 2.00pm.
- December 14th - Wigmore MADS, Present our annual
Christmas concert 'Christmas Madness', Community
Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore 8.00pm, Tickets £6 &
£5 concessions from Sue 01634 370639.
- December 14th - Instep Dancing, Rainham School for
Girls, Derwent Way, 7.30 - 11.30pm, Christmas Dance
ticket only, 01634 363738 s.colins02@btinternet.com
- December 14th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (7th Dec).
- December 15th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Tony
and Ann 01634 406634, 10.00am Trosley Country
Park (Pay and Display). TQ632610 TN15 7JW for a 6.6
mile walk, Bring picnic lunch for midway break.
- December 15th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet Graham Starkey 01634 371948 07963
141390 Harrietsham Station (charges apply) for a 5.5
mile walk, long gentle climb up with a short steep
descent towards the end of the walk, No dogs.
- December 15th - Hempstead Valley Carol Concert, from
4.45pm with school children and members of local
churches, accompanied by the Medway Band. All ages
and faiths are welcome.
- December 15th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship
Groups, Carol Service, St Peters Church, Bredhurst,
3.30pm. Children very welcome, details 01634 364309
- December 16th - 21st - St Margaret's Church, Rainham,
Christmas Tree Festival
- December 16th - Monday Hub, (see 9th Dec).
- December 16th - Parkwood Leisure Club, St Paul's
Church, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Christmas Service, Party Bring

- and Share, new members welcome ring 01634 366056.
- December 16th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Run, Kenilworth area 6.00 - 8.15pm
- December 16th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute,
7.30pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, Christmas
Party', competition - Candles, ring 01634 262577
- December 17th - Dementia Café, St Paul's Church, Long
Catlis Road, 1.00 - 3.00pm. A friendly and supportive
meeting place for people with Dementia and their
carers. Everyone welcome, free refreshments available
more information Sylvia Wolfson 07557 111060 or
email sylvia.wolfson@alzheimers.org.uk
- December 17th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Run, Hempstead (The Rise area) 6.00 - 8.15pm
- December 17th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,
Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.45
pm £3.00. Flights of Fancy - Brian Nobbs. For Walks
see www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.
- December 18th - Hempstead Active Retirement
Association (HempstARA) Scout Hall, Duke's Meadow
Drive, Hempstead, 2.00pm.
- December 18th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Run, Lower Beechings area 6.00 - 8.15pm
- December 18th - Wigmore Lecture, Jane Peyton - School
of Booze, 8.00pm, £4.75 (includes seasonal
refreshments) Wigmore Library, 01634 337799
- December 19th - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 -
4.00pm, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road,
Christmas Meeting, Visitors welcome for small entry
charge per visit. Ring 01634 366276 for details
- December 19th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Informal
Meeting, (see 12th Dec).
- December 19th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Run, Twydall (Waltham to Begonia) 6.00 - 8.15pm
- December 20th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh
Run, Twydall (Staplehurst to Crundale) 6.00 - 8.15pm
- December 20th - Winter Solstice with Jane Marvell,
7.30pm. An ancient celebration to welcome the return
of the Sun. Candles, evergreens, magical celebration.
The Centre, Farthing Corner, ME8 8PQ
www.thecentre-mindbodyspirit.co.uk next to
Travelodge
- December 21st - Granary Evangelical Church, Oasthouse,
Granary Close, Rainham - Christmas Carol Service
3pm, free coffee & mince pies. Ring 01634 310959.
Transport available www.granary-church.org.uk

Continued on Page 11

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THE RAINHAM PAROCHIAL CHARITY
 Are you a resident of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Margaret's Rainham?
 The Charity is able to make small grants to those in need who live in the Parochial area. They are unable to make grants in areas which are the responsibility of the statutory State Benefits but may be able to assist those who have incurred unforeseen expenses which are not covered by the benefit system. Are you involved in an organisation or project which is for the benefit of residents of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Rainham?
 The Charity Commission gave approval for any surplus income to be given to other organisations and or projects which are for the benefit of those living in the area. This year the surplus funds stand at £1000. The trustees of the Charity invite applications from those eligible. Further information and application forms may be obtained from the Hon Secretary, Mr K Stevens, 10, School Lane, Lower Halstow, Sittingbourne, ME9 7ET 01795 844304

CINDERELLA
 The Golden Anniversary season at the Oasthouse theatre continues with some great entertainment. Why not pop along and see: Cinderella by Alan P Frayn in association with Stage Right Creative Ltd - A traditional family pantomime. Performances are on: January 10.11.17.18.23.24.25.31 & 1 February at 8.00pm with matinees every Saturday at 2.00pm and 5.00pm
 This classic fairy tale is brought to life by the Rainham Theatrical Society. Will poor Cinders make it to the ball or will her Ugly Step Sisters prevent her from meeting Prince Charming. Can her fairy Godmother save the day or is she destined to stay at home with Buttons? To find out you'll have to come along to the Oasthouse Theatre...oh yes you will.
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 www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

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GILLINGHAM LIONS CLUB, SLEIGH RUNS
 Each evening starts at 6.00pm and should finish at approximately 8.15pm
Monday 9th Hempstead - Barncroft, Hempstead, Almond, Magdalen, Lavenda, Birch, Plumtree, Medlar, Cedar, Kingsdown
Tuesday 10th Hempstead - Coppergate, Evergreen, Shepherdsgate, Honey, Lamplighters, Cobblestone, Horseshoe, Old Barn, Greenfinches, Everglades
Wednesday 11th Fairview - Foulds, Primrose, Magnolia, Clematis, Norman, Woodside, Bredhurst
Thursday 12th Parkwood - Campleshon, Wood, Queendown, Lineacre, Idenwood, Hallwood, Donet, Dixwell, Long Catlis, Readscroft, Beke
Friday 13th Parkwood - Capel, Gunnis, Gladwyn, Culpepper, Conrad, Chipstead, Long Catlis, Hawbeck, Roper, Sedley, Deanwood
Monday 16th Kenilworth - Windermere, Sandown, Sunningdale, Wimbourne, Tanker, Gayhurst
Tuesday 17th Hempstead - The Rise, Sandy Dell, Hadleigh, Landor, Lambsfrith, Martin, Houghton, Blowers, Lullingstone, Marquis, Copperpenny
Wednesday 18th Lower Beechings - Eastcourt, Littlebourne, Bishopsbourne, Kennington, Brabourne, Rolvenden, Ruckinge, Boughton
Thursday 19th Twydale - Waltham, Elham, Lyminge, Bodiam, Sturry, Herne, Blean, Patrixbourne, Detling, Hawthorn, Begonia
Friday 20th Twydale - Staplehurst, Goudhurst, Ash, Leeds, Charing, Lynsted, Bearsted, Crundale

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 email babymassage@the139club.co.uk
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

One naturalist has written that the almost ideal conditions of late spring, when flowers were not frosted, were followed by sufficient moisture to ensure a bumper crop of fruit, nuts and berries this year. The Woodland Trust has reported that the autumn leaf colours arrived two weeks later than usual, but the weather conditions were ideal for glorious displays of red leaves. This news prompted me to visit, in early November, the Ragstone Hills near Sevenoaks. Oak and beech trees dominate the woodland spread across the Hills although birch, ash, sweet chestnut and other trees are also present. From the high, southern escarpment of the Ragstone Hills, there are spectacular views towards the High Wealds of Kent and East Sussex, including the high ground of Ashdown Forest. I decided to visit the three hamlets on that escarpment, namely, Ide Hill, Toys Hill and Crockham Hill.

After motoring through Sevenoaks, I arrived at Ide Hill, which sits in an ancient landscape of irregular shaped fields. I noticed that some of the field hedges were laden with hawthorn berries, sloes and rose hips. The bright yellow leaves of field maple trees stood out in the Autumn sunshine. The houses and other buildings at Ide Hill are mainly set around the village green and they include the spiky, little Victorian church of St Mary the Virgin, the highest church in Kent. Whilst strolling near the church I disturbed a small flock of chaffinches feeding on the squashed kernels of fallen beech mast that had been run over by passing traffic. Whilst in the vicinity of a group of oaks trees, I could both see and hear a couple of jays. They were collecting acorns and flying off to bury them. Whilst I was watching the birds' activities, a group of ramblers filed by on a nearby section of the Greensand Way.

I subsequently headed for Toys Hill through extensive woodland, passing the Fox and Hounds Inn, which stands in splendid isolation by the road side, at almost 800 feet above sea level. I also passed some cyclists kitted out in colourful outfits, as if for the Tour de France. Doubtless the steep roads of the Ragstone Hills are a test of their climbing ability. The woods at

Toys Hill were devastated in the Great Storm of October 1987 but, since that time, they have shown a remarkable regeneration. Having parked my car, I took a walk in the woods, which are popular with dog walkers and mountain bikers. I came across holly, rowan and white beam trees laden with berries. The storm laid flat many ancient, pollarded beech trees. The few that survived were sporting golden, yellow leaves. The buzzing of insects drew my attention to festoons of ivy covered in tiny, yellow flowers.

Wasps, bees and flies were feeding on the nectar of the flowers, prior to their hibernation. The hamlet of Toys Hill consists of just a few houses. On Puddleduck Lane I stopped at Octavia Hill's Well to admire the views to Crowborough Beacon and beyond.

On the way to Crockham Hill I called in at Chartwell for refreshment. The house is, of course, the former home of Sir Winston Churchill and is now owned by the National Trust. It being a sunny day during the half term holiday, the restaurant was full of parents, grandparents and children. Some of the latter, shod in wellingtons, were clutching sticks and autumn leaves. The National Trust are, quite rightly, actively encouraging children to be brought to their properties. As I sat there eating my carrot cake, I wondered how many of the thousands of visitors to Chartwell know that one of the three founders of the National Trust, a lady, lies buried, not far away, under a yew tree in a country churchyard.

I went to Crockham Hill, not only to enjoy the views, but also to visit two buildings, the first being Holy Trinity Church. It is in the churchyard of that church that Octavia Hill is buried. It was widely considered that she deserved to be buried in Westminster Abbey, but she chose a quiet Kentish churchyard. Octavia campaigned tirelessly to save the vanishing open spaces around London and to improve the conditions in London's slums. She was one of the three founding members of the National Trust in 1895 and it was due to her efforts that certain open land in the Ragstone Hills, including some at Ide Hill and Toys Hill, was acquired for the Trust. The second building I went to see was Crockham Hill House which was, for many years, a youth hostel, where ramblers and cyclists

could stay the night. The brass bell at the front door, complete with a short rope attached to the clapper, is still there, as is the bike shed with a turquoise blue door. Ramblers and cyclists still enjoy the fresh air of the Ragstone Hills, as I discovered on my visit. Those who need overnight accommodation have a good choice of bed and breakfast places. They no longer can, or need to sleep in bunks in single sex dormitories and help with the chores before leaving. Happy YHA days!

Joe Ennis

MEMORIES of CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME

With Christmas almost upon us it will be difficult for most parents with small children to even think about the pantomime season. However, the Panto season is fast approaching and the Rainham Theatrical Society (RaTS) are in full rehearsal with what promises to be a hilarious production of Cinderella.

The mere mention of the word Pantomime and I am once again a child taken back to the 1940s when as a small boy of 5 or 6 years old I was introduced to the colours and wonders of the Pantomime. My Granddad, a retired regimental Sergeant Major of the Royal Horse Artillery, belonged to the Radical Club in Albany Road just off of the Old Kent Road in SE London, and about this time each year he would purchase three tickets for the forthcoming Pantomime for his grandchildren at half a crown each (twelve and a half pence) - a lot of money in those days. The Radical Club went back to the 1800s and had a wide wooden staircase leading up to a large hall graced by a full size stage with the most beautiful fire/safety curtain I had ever seen. This depicted a beautiful garden with a large fountain in the centre that fascinated my young eyes and the memory of which has stayed with me all my life.

There were not many houses left standing in my part of war torn London which was very close to a railway goods yard, a canal and about a mile from the London docks, let alone beautiful gardens. The Hall would fill with 400 to 500 yelling and shouting children until the beautiful fire screen lifted and the curtains opened. Then as if by magic silence descended as Buttons or another character took the stage and the story began. I wonder how many of those children lost their young hearts to Cinderella or Little Red Ridinghood or any of Principal girls of Panto Land. I know I did and come to that still do. We would boo the villain and

gustily sing the songs even making up our own words such as Daisy doats and dosy doats and little landsy divey and with all those young voices it sounded right even if it wasn't. After the Panto had ended each child was given an apple and orange and a small bag of sweets as they left which was a big treat in hard times. For those children that did not have a granddad there was the chance on Saturday mornings of queuing to see the Pantomime for six pence, even this was not easy to find for some poor souls.

So what has changed as I wait anxiously for the box office to open to book our tickets for Cinderella? Well nothing really, I may have snow on the roof and not so fast on my pins and that bloke Arthur Rightus may have called. But I shall be there at the Oast House Theatre cheering Buttons (Andy Stringer and Kathy West) and falling in love with Cinderella (Carly Caller and Lauren Feelings) and laughing fit to bust at all the wonderful goings on. So if you are sitting next to a man in his second childhood why don't you join him and boo and hiss. You will feel years younger when you go home. Maybe I will see you there but don't delay these tickets go faster than hot cakes.

John Sansom
01634 371140

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Find how Christmas was celebrated during the Second World War. Listen to the Royal Christmas Message radio broadcast by King George in 1939. Watch 'Medway Lindy Hoppers' dance in the style of the 1940s, participate in the fun. Observe cooking with rationed food. Visit 'Sapper Christmas' and receive a traditional toy (additional cost £2.50). Make vintage home-made decorations. Listen to a choir singing classic Carols. Turn your hair into a 1940s up-do hair style. Listen to fashion historian Lee Ault, talk 'Rationed fashion: Clothes of the 1940s'. Browse in our vintage market, Normal admission prices apply. Ticket valid for 12 months on gift aided entrance.

CANCER RESEARCH

The Cancer Research Coffee Morning held at Macklands House on October 1st raised the grand total of £255.20p. Thank you everyone for your kind donations which help with vital research and for making the morning such a success

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Diary 2013 - 14

December 21st - Carol Concert Rainham Ladies Choir
with The UK Paper Band, 7.30pm The Royal Dockyard
Church, Chatham, Raffle and refreshments in aid of
Marie Curie Cancer Care, Tickets £7 adults, £3 children
under 12 Ring 01634 370797 or 613715 or email
secretary@rainhamladieschoir.org.uk

December 21st - Quiz Night, Oasthouse Community
Centre, 7.30pm, Admission £2, Members £1.50, Rolls
available 60p, details 01634 710553

December 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim,
10.00am, Otford village car park. TQ526594 TN14
5PQ for a 5 mile walk following the Darenth valley
Picnic lunch midway, pub and tea room at the end.

December 22nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet John Williams 01622 764821 07977
614033 Hunton Village Hall for a 4.75 pleasantly
undulating walk with good views, Dogs allowed.

December 22nd - Candlelit Christmas service, 6.30pm,
£5, The Centre, (see 20th Dec).

December 22nd - St Margaret's Church, Rainham, Carols
by Candlelight 6.30pm, all welcome.

December 23rd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 9th Dec).

December 24th - St Margaret's Church, Rainham,
Christmas Eve Crib Services, 1.30 and 4.00pm,
Midnight Mass 11.30pm with carols from 11.00pm

December 25th - St Margaret's Church, Rainham,
Christmas Day Family Communion 9.30am

December 25th - Granary Evangelical Church, Christmas
Day Service 10.30am, (see 21st Dec).

December 29th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Peter
and Ann 01634 718895, 10.00am, at far end of Lower
Upnor just past the Arethusa Centre. TQ716726 ME3
7JQ for a 5.5 mile walk

December 29th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet Gill Smith 01622 710569 07999 858981
Oldbury Hill car park Styants Bottom Road, off A25
between Ightham and Sevenoaks for a 4.5 mile hilly,
woodland walk, No dogs.

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December 31st - Instep Dancing, New Years Eve Dance
ticket only (see 14th Dec).

January 1st - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Geoff
07525161766, 11.00am French Hospital / La

Providence, Rochester High Street 1.5 mile gentle walk
around Rochester suitable for push chairs. Pub at end.

January 2nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Members and
Helpers only for this meeting commencing 1.00pm

January 4th - Medway Folk Dance Club, New Year
Dance, (see 7th Dec).

January 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim,
10.00am at Challock community centre. TR011505

TN25 4AU for a 9 mile walk through Kings Wood

January 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Roger Norman, 01634 232404 07941 965272

Ightham Sports Field car park right hand side A25 one
mile past Borough Green TN15 9AJ for a moderate 5

mile walk, parts muddy if wet and a few steps, No dogs.
January 5th - Sunday service with special guest medium

Tracey Fance, 6.30pm. Healing available (20th Dec).

January 6th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Tea and Chat, (see
16th Dec).

January 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Mike,
10.00am just north of Wrotham village (Old London Rd
a dead end). TQ608597 TN15 7EA for a 7 mile walk to

the top of the Downs, Choice of pubs at end.

January 8th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Quiz Nite
- bring drink and nibbles - £1, (see 11th Dec).

January 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Memoirs of a
Military Musician, John Tice, (see 12th Dec).

January - 10th.11.17.18.23.24.25.31 & 1st Feb - Oast
House Theatre, Cinderella by Alan P Frayn traditional
family pantomime, 8.00pm, matinees every Saturday

2.00 & 5.00pm, Box Office 0844 8793224 or
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January 10th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History
Society, Hidden London - Ian Porter, (see 13th Dec).

January 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet John
07879857307, 10.00am at Ightham Mote, Mote Road,
Ivy Hatch. (Car park charge). TQ584535 TN15 0NT
for a 12 mile circular walk, Bring picnic lunch for
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Diary 2014

January 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Tony and
Ann 01634 406634, 10.00am at Horsmonden village
green opposite pub (Gun & Spitroast Pub parking for
patron's only). TQ700405 TN12 8HT for a 5 mile
circular walk to the east of Horsmonden Bring picnic
lunch for midway break. Pub at end with lunches.

January 12th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am meet John Williams, 01622 Westerham car
park off A25TN16 1TD for a moderate 5 mile walk
theme Wolfe and Churchill, dogs allowed.

January 13th - Medway Organ Club Concert, Organist -
Ben Scott-Hyde, (see 9th Dec).

January 13th - Parkwood Leisure Club, Bingo, (16th Dec

January 13th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group
to help people still in employment who have lost a
loved one, (see 9th Dec).

January 13th - Rainham Wives, New Year Party, (9th Dec

January 14th - Medway Antique and Collectors' Club,
London - Stranger than Fiction - George Wildridge, St
George Hotel, Chatham, 8.00pm visitors welcome
medwayantiquespublicity1@virginmedia.com

January 15th - Wigmore Lecture, Claire Langhamer -
The English in Love, 8.00pm Tickets £3.75, Wigmore
Library, 01634 337799

January 16th - Rainham Women's Institute, Speaker
on "Care in the Community", (see 19th Dec).

January 16th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Haunted
Rochester, Neil Arnold, (see 12th Dec).

January 18th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,

10.00am, meet Stephen Manning, 07551 712438,
Charing Village car park off School Road TN27 0JN
Walking the North Downs Way section 10, for a hard
9.5 mile walk, No dogs.

January 18th - Beekeeping Course, 10 week course,
10.00am - 12noon, Methodist Church Hall, Station
Road, Further details from Pat Clare 01634 233748 or
patclare89@me.com

January 18th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 7th Dec).

January 19th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Ray,
10.00am at Capstone Park lower car park (by the lake)
TQ778654 ME7 3JG for a 4.5 mile walk. Pub at end.

January 19th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am meet David Brown, 01634 373833 Camer
Country Park car park DA13 0XT for a moderate/easy
4.75 mile circular walk generally flat, muddy if wet
January 20th, 27th & Feb 3rd - Baby Massage Course, St
Paul's Church, Parkwood, 10.00 - 11.00am, £5 for
course, contact Elaine Wheeler 01634 379360 or email
babymassage@the139club.co.uk

January 20th - Parkwood Leisure Club, New Years Party,
(see 16th Dec).

January 20th - Rainham Wives, Bingo With a Difference,
(see 9th Dec).

January 22nd - Bereavement Group, 1.00pm,
Wigmore Evangelical Free Church, Durham Road,
details 01634 788546 or 07986 699785

January 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim,
10.00am at Otford village car park. TQ526594 TN14
SPQ for a 8 mile walk Picnic lunch, pub /tea room end.

January 22nd - All Saints Women's Fellowship, A Fun
Music Presentation - John Pearce, (see 11th Dec).

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