

ACTION FORUM

SEPTEMBER 2014

NUMBER 502

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



Barges in Otterham Creek pre1914. Mike Gunnill is compiling a book telling the history of this area and the nearby brickfields to mark the planning consent given recently by Swale Borough Council for building on the last remaining brick field, Four Gun Field in Otterham Quay Lane. F G Willmott described Four Gun in his book 'Bricks and Brickies' as the smallest of Eastwoods brickfields in Otterham only having two hand-berths and three washbacks whose moulders for many years were Jack Packer and Walter (Lewsher) Swan, both Rainham men. The field closed about a year after two new Berry patent brickmaking machines were installed in 1953. See the letter on page 2.

Robert J. Kitney

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Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller

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Editorial

September brings with it a whole host of changes. It seemed to come a bit early this year weather wise with the very disappointing August bank holiday Monday. As that was our last extra day off until Christmas the cold and extremely wet day did nothing to help lift the spirits. Still perhaps we will now have an extended Indian summer to enjoy. We can only hope. This often happens just as the new academic year starts and schools, colleges, universities and all the local groups who enjoy the use of their premises return with renewed enthusiasm for the year ahead. We include news in our pages of several new ventures who would welcome your support. For the young and energetic a new Volleyball Club is seeking members to join in this sport. Think how good you will look on the sand next summer when a game of beach volleyball is suggested with a few months of practice under your belt. For the more sedate a Chess and Bridge Club starts on September 8th. A Wedding Fayre is planned at St Margaret's Church, Rainham to encourage those about to tie the knot to consider a traditional Church Wedding. Home Start need volunteers (training is provided) for an initiative which provides families who are struggling with young children the knowledge and expertise you have gained during your own parenting years. Finally for those who wish to make new friends, perhaps having recently retired or who now spend most of their time at home, two Friendship Groups are planned by Hands. One already running at the Millennium Centre, Rainham on the last Thursday each month is happy to welcome new members and another club is planned for Twydall. If you wish to find out more give Lance a ring on 01634 577984. An annual event for many years, also aimed at those who are lonely, is the Lions Harvest Teas which are again taking place in October, at the Millennium Centre. The organisers are particularly keen for elderly people who live alone or are not able to get out much to be invited. If you know of someone in this position please read the letter on page 3 for details.

With the centenary of the beginning of the First World War still very much on our minds we have some nostalgic reminiscences. David Wood takes us back one hundred year to give an insight to life in Rainham during that autumn. It is very difficult to imagine how people felt as the gradual realisation came during

those first few months of war that the troops would not 'be home for Christmas' and in fact our government had committed us to years of warfare ahead.

Of course we also include our usual Diary entries this month. Plenty of organised walks for you to join, an excellent way to make friends, enjoy the open air and the countryside plus the added bonus – it's good for your heart and body. If walking is not for you we have many more clubs, concerts, quizzes and produce shows for all eager for your attention so do have a very good month and we will be with you again in October.

Correspondence

OTTERHAM QUAY

Dear Editor

The last of the Upchurch brickfields, a site known as Four Gun Field in Otterham Quay Lane, Upchurch is to be built on shortly. Planning permission was recently granted by Swale Borough Council. I am hopeful that I can publish a book called Otterham, Your Heritage. This will highlight the history of the area and use many old photographs of the area. Readers of Action Forum were very helpful when I produced my last book, Upchurch in Old Picture Postcards with photographs and details. I am again asking for anyone with old photographs of Otterham, the brickfields, Otterham Creek and if possible Overshore and the Falcon Cement Works to please contact me. I didn't want the last of the brickfields to disappear without any lasting record. The book is in its final stages but I would be very grateful for any assistance.

Thank you
Mike Gunnill
01634 373572
Email: mikegunnill@mac.com

OASTHOUSE THEATRE

Dear Editor,

An evening of comedy is in store this September at the Oasthouse theatre. The plot revolves around Margot Buchanan, a very witty ex-actress living in a retirement hotel on the South Coast. Margot is trying to forget it is her seventieth birthday but all around are intent on celebrating it, even Freda, her psychic friend who talks to ghosts. When her ex- husband, Sir Leo Buchanan turns up chaos reigns! Laying the Ghost - A comedy by Simon Williams Oasthouse Theatre, Rainham
September 11.12.13.18.19.20 Curtain up at 8.00pm
Box Office on 0844 8793224 or on-line
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

Yours sincerely
Dean Caston
Public Relations Manager
Rainham Theatrical Society

HARVEST TEAS

Dear Editor,

Once again, the partners of The Lions Club of Gillingham are planning Harvest Teas for Senior Citizens of Rainham. The teas have been arranged for Sunday 12th October and Sunday 26th October, both between 3.30 and 6.00pm in the Millennium Centre, Rainham.

As in previous years, we extend invitations to the elderly who either live alone or do not have the opportunity to get out very often. Please encourage family members, friends or neighbours to apply for a free invitation by writing to Mrs Brenda Woodrow, Flat 1 Macklands House, Station Road, Rainham ME8 7QX, or by telephoning Brenda on 01634 379062 or Mrs Yvonne Iles on 01634 373840. Transport to and from the Millennium Centre can be arranged if required.

A pleasant afternoon is guaranteed and we look forward to welcoming you.

Yours sincerely
Beryl Brenton
(on behalf of Lions' Partners)

MEMORIES OF RAINHAM

Dear Editor

On reading the letter from Richard Church regarding the passing of Miss Cheeseman published in your July 2014 edition, the information concerning the Council School brought back many memories to me. Seeing the names of the various teachers generated events in my mind which gave me immense pleasure.

I started at the Infants School in January 1938 and I also was initially in Miss Cheeseman's class. However, during the early period of the War school attendances were on a half day basis.

Unfortunately I did not pass the Eleven Plus and as such I spent the next two years at the Rainham Boy's School, situated then, in Orchard Street. However, in those days you had a second chance to advance and I was one of three boy's, the other two were Derek Cook and Doug Lacey, who at the age of 13 passed the exam for Chatham Technical School (Holcombe), the school now has Grammar status.

I left Holcombe at 16 to take up a junior position in the Finance section at the local Water Co, where upon I continued my studies at Evening Classes. Two years later I was conscripted to do my National Service, two years in the Army. On my return to the Water Co. I

resumed my studies where I met my wife, Sheila, and am pleased to say we have now been married 53 years and are proud parents of three daughters. (By the way, Sheila spent nine years at the Broadview P.O. and subsequently, as Manager of the Newsagent's.)

There have been many changes to the Rainham I knew as a young boy, nevertheless, I am still proud to say I was 'Born and Bred' in Rainham.

Yours sincerely
Vic Wickenden
Email s.wickenden@sky.com

FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

Do you live in Twydall or Rainham? Are you looking to meet people in your local area? Hands in Gillingham are setting up a new community friendship group in Twydall funded by the People's Health Trust and we have an existing group in Rainham at the Millennium Centre the last Thursday of every month. The groups are designed to provide support for those seeking to make new friends but find it difficult due to a change in circumstances. We provide a safe and relaxed environment in which to socialise over a cuppa and take part in a wide range of activities. If you or anyone you know would be interested please call Lance at Hands in Gillingham on 01634 577984 between 9.30am and 12.30pm Monday to Friday. All enquiries welcome.

DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors are needed for:

Rainham

Hawthorne Avenue, Caldew Avenue
Brown Street, Holding Street, Suffolk Court

Wigmore

Wigmore Road (Woodside to Fairview)
The Hazels, Fellows Close, Chamberlain Court
Foulds Close

Parkwood

Collett Walk, Moyle Close, Lubbock Walk

Hempstead

Wildwood, Black Roock, Stalham, Coppice Court
Barncroft and Old Carriageway

If you live near any of these roads or are able to travel to them and could help for about an hour or so during the first week of each month we would be very pleased to hear from you on 01634 310011 (please mention that you are calling about Action Forum) or email af@thenet.uk.net

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Diary 2014

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: 23rd September

September 6th - Rainham Horticultural Society Show

Methodist Church Hall, Rainham 2.00 - 4.00 pm
September 6th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Village Show,
2.30pm, ring 233554 for details.

September 6th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United
Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham,
7.30 - 10.00pm, new and experienced dancers, with or
without a partner, call 01634 366189 or 388546

September 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet
Tony/Ann 01634 406634, Lullingstone Country Park,
Parking Fee, TQ526637 DA4 0JF for 6.5 mile walk via
Cockerhurst, Lullingstone Park Farm, Bring picnic.

September 7th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am Meet Pat Wells & Anne Bond 07804 837155
or 07778 302866 Medway Secure Training Centre, Sir
Evelyn Road, Rochester 6 mile moderate walk, some
road walking, no stiles but some climbs, No dogs

September 7th - Volunteer Task Day, Riverside Country
Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, help at the Park, meet new
people, refreshments provided, 01634 337432

September 7th - Summer Fete at the Bredhurst Cats
Adoption Centre, Matts Hill Road, ME9 7XA, 11am -
4pm, Parking close by, Entertainment, refreshments,
stalls, Contact Carol 07973 677390

September 8th - Chess and Bridge Club, Adults. Monday
afternoons, Rainham area, New members welcome ring
07914 241052

September 8th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group,
Millennium Centre, Rainham, meets 2nd Monday
evening each month to help people still in employment
join us for a cuppa and chat ring Julie 01634 364309

September 8th - Medway Organ Club Concert, Parkwood
Community Centre, 7.30pm, Organist - David Last,
ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694 for details.

September 9th - Afternoon Dance, Tesco's Retirement
Staff in aid of Alzheimer Society, 2.00 - 4.00pm, 44
Two Club (Featherby Road) £3 at the door.

September 9th - Gillingham & District Fuchsia &
Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm Rainham School for
Girls, Derwent Way, Fuchsias Our Way Entertaining

talk by John Hitchcock and Dave Abbott. For more
information ring 01634 852519.

September 9th - Medway Antique and Collectors' Club,
London - the dark side of the City - Stuart Robinson, St
George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 7.30 for 8.00 pm
all visitors are made most welcome. Enquiries
medwayantiquespublicity1@virginmedia.com

September 10th - Twydall Community Friendship Group,
Holy Trinity Church Hall, 1.30 - 3.30pm Cuppa and
biscuits provided (£1 fee), details ring 01634 577984 or
email community@gillinghamvolunteercentre.com.

September 10th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall,
Mel Rees - My Family and other Setbacks, visitors
welcome, For details ring 01634 389966

September 10th - Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm
Upchurch Village Hall, Demonstration 'Seasonal
Splendour' by John Chennel. For further information
ring 01622 884657, 01795 472973 or 01634 863034

September 10th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, My Year as a Mayor
- Cllr Josie Iles, for details Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

September 11th - Wigmore Thursday Club, A
Lighthearted Look at the 40s, Shirley Goodhew, St
Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, for over 50s,
ring 01634 235507 for details.

September 11th - Medway Inter Faith Action, Medway
Council Meeting Room, Dock Road, Chatham, 7.30pm
all welcome, ring Hugh Hawkins 01634 843307 or
email julihugh@tiscali.co.uk for details

September 11th - and every Thursday - Belly dance for
fitness and fun, 7.30 - 8.30pm The Centre Mind Body
Spirit, The Pavilion, Farthing Corner Services ME8
8PQ, £5. Details Rosie 07763 179941.

September 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 & 20th - Laying the Ghost,
A comedy by Simon Williams, Oasthouse Theatre,
Rainham, 8.00pm, Box Office 08448 793224 or
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

September 11th - Donn Barcott Band, 44Two Sports and

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Social Club, Featherby Road, Gillingham, 8.30 -
11.00pm, Admission £6, Details ring 01634 405037

September 12th - 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 a cuppa and chat ring Julie 01634
364309 for details.

September 12th - UpARA Monthly Meeting, Upchurch
Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2, New
Members Welcome, details email Chairman David
Powell davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

September 12th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History
Society, Byron Road Primary School, Gillingham,
7.15pm, 'German U Boats Construction & operations' -
Frank Turner, Visitors welcome for a small charge,
information from Ron Baker 01634 854982 or email
r.baker1234@btinternet.com

September 13th - Rainham South Councillors Surgery,
Parkwood Community Centre, 9.30am - 12 noon, No
appointment necessary.

September 13th - Upchurch Horticultural Society
Summer Show, Village Hall, doors open 2.00pm, free
entry, information from Secretary Steve 07703 339290

September 13th - September Songs, Kingfisher Singers
The Brian Tumour Charity, 7.30 - 10.00pm, St
Margaret's Church, High Street Rainham, Ticket £8.50
 (£7.50 in advance). Contact Olwen 01634 263622

September 13th - Instep Dancing, Rainham School for
Girls, Derwent Way, 8.00 - 11.00pm, for Ballroom -
Latin - Sequence Dancing, details 01634 363738
s.collins02@btinternet.com

September 14th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet
Bob/Kath, Loose Hill, near the Chequers Pub.
TQ758521 ME15 OBL for a 6 mile circular walk
through nature reserve. Pub at end.

September 15th - Monday Hub, St Paul's Church,
Parkwood, 10.00am - 12.30pm, light refreshments,
conversation, games etc, All welcome, 01634 230780

September 15th - Chess and Bridge Club, (see 8th Sept).
September 15th - Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens
Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, alternate
Mondays 2.00 - 4.30pm, new members welcome,
details 01634 230500

September 15th - Rainham Evening WI, 7.30pm,
Millennium Centre, Mr Colin Breed 'Zeebrugge'
Competition - Apron, ring 01634 262577 for details.

September 15th - Rainham Wives, Methodist Church

Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham 8.00pm, Welcome back:
members evening, New members welcome, £2 per visit
includes refreshments, details ring Sue 01634 230639.

September 16th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,
Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.45
pm £3.00. Fascination of Bird Migration - John
Buckingham. www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

September 16th - Floral Art Group United Reformed
Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30 -
9.00pm, 'Work along with me - a Foliage Pedestal'
workshop with Viv O'Sullivan, Kaye 01634 232998.

September 17th - Hempstead Active Retirement
Association (HempstARA), Scout Hall, Duke's
Meadow Drive, 2.00pm

September 17th - Bredhurst Garden Club 7.30pm, Village
Hall, AGM Betty Carroll Demonstration - Small Flower
Arrangement, new members welcome ring 233554

September 18th - Rainham Women's Institute,
Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham, 1.45
- 4.00pm, 25th Birthday Party, Visitors welcome for
small entry charge per visit, Ring 01634 366276

September 18th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Romania - I
want to know what love is, Phil Shorthouse, (see 11th)

September 19th - Charity Cabaret Night in aid of Hands
In Medway 7.00 for 7.15. Dobbies Garden World,
Courtney Road, Tickets £9 light supper included.
Please bring your own drinks. For tickets, call Wendy
or Ann 07816 159668 or 01634 815430

September 19th - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club,
Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Derek Nash
Jazz/ Funk Experience, Admission £10, Enquiries
01634 365352 or 07544 312743

September 20th - Craft and Produce Market, Millennium
Centre, Rainham, 9.00am - 12.30pm, Free entry,
Refreshments available. In aid of St. Margaret's
Church, contact Tony Andrews 01634 371941

September 20th - St. Margaret's Church, Rainham
Wedding Fayre 10.00am - 2.00pm. All welcome
Church Office 01634 362023 for any queries.

September 20th - Paediatric First Aid Course, 9.30am -
4pm, St Matthew's Community Hall, Drewery Drive.
£20 per person. Free lunch. Contact Sarah to book:
sarah@the139club.co.uk or mobile 07731 786 333. See
www.the139club.co.uk for more details.

September 20th & 27th - 2 Day Active Birth Workshop,
9.30am - 5pm, (St Matthew's see details above)

Continued on Page 11

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We are a friendly club playing volleyball every
Sunday 6.00 – 8.00pm and Tuesday 7.00 – 9.00pm
at Rainham Girls School gym, and we enter teams in
both the men's and women's Kent Leagues. We are
looking for new players of all abilities to join us; if
you would like more details please call Martin on
07772 593674 or email **restorm@btinternet.com**

ROCHESTER SWING PRESERVATION SOCIETY
Thursday 25th September. Musicians of
the Rochester Swing Preservation Society with this
Months special guest, Cruise cabaret star
guitarist / vocalist Steve Galler
The Hastings Arms Function Room. Lower Rainham
Road (leading to Danes Hill) Gillingham ME7 2YD
Free parking, 8.30pm start. Admission £7 plus raffle.
Everyone welcome. Further details or to reserve a
table 01634 712217 Find us on facebook
'rochester swing preservation society'

REUNION Chatham Grammar School for Girls
All former pupils and staff of Chatham Grammar
School for Girls, Rainham Road, Chatham, are
invited to the Annual Reunion Lunch on Saturday
4th October, in the School Hall at CGSG. Pre-lunch
drinks will be served in the Textiles room from
12.30 with lunch at 1.00pm
Our speaker this year is the brother of an Old Girl.
He is going to talk to us about his 30 year career
with the Metropolitan Police including periods in
Royalty Protection and in the Traffic Division during
the time of the IRA bombing campaign in London.
Tickets are now on sale priced at £25. Applications
for tickets in writing, enclosing your cheque
(payable to Chatham Grammar Association) and the
return address for tickets, to The Treasurer, Chatham
Grammar Association, 37 Homefield Drive,
Rainham, Gillingham, Kent. ME8 8RS.

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SEPTEMBER MISCELLANY
Upchurch Choral Society
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Saturday 20th September, 7.30pm
St. Mary's Church, Upchurch
Entry by Programme £5 at the door
or contact Sally Chalmers 01634 305450
Interval Refreshments by Friend's of St. Mary's

COFFEE MORNING
Macmillan Cancer Support
Wednesday 24th September, 10.00am – 12noon
Millennium Centre, Rainham
Tea or coffee will be served with a variety of
delicious cakes to choose from at the cost of
£5 per person. All proceeds are for Macmillan
Cancer Support. Do come and join us and help us
support this amazing charity.

WIGMORE MADS
Present our September Concert
'As long as we have music'
Saturday 27th September at 8.00pm
St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive,
Wigmore
Tickets £6 & £5 concessions - Sue 01634 370639

HAIRSPRAY
Gillingham Dramatic Society Productions in
association with NODA presents Hairspray at the
Hazlitt Arts Centre Maidstone
Tuesday 7th - Saturday 11th October, 7.30pm
Saturday matinee 2.30pm
Tickets £11.50 and £13.50 from 01622 758611
www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk

TABLE-TOP BOOT FAIR
Hempstead Village Hall Committee are holding a
Table-Top Boot Fair at the Village Hall in
Hempstead Road (Behind All Saints' Church) on
Saturday, 1st November from 11.00am to
3.00pm. Tables are £7.50. If you are interested in
having a table please contact David, by phone 01634
377177, or email - **davidwilliamfuller@gmail.com**

CHRISTMAS CRAFT AND GIFT FAIR
in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital
Saturday 29th November, 9.30am - 2.30pm
Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, Rainham
Stalls available £15
contact Paula 01634 373450 or
Stacey 07897 007979 Free entry and all welcome.

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR AUGUST

In August I visited Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, which lies between the North and South Downs. It consists of one of the largest expanses of heath land in south east England. The characteristic plant of heath land is, of course, heather. Classic lowland heath, of the kind Thomas Hardy wrote passionately about, is one of Britain's fastest disappearing habitats. Heath land is being lost mainly through the invasion of bracken and silver birch, among other plants. It is the habitat of reptiles, including adder, slow worm and common lizard and birds such as Dartford warbler, stonechat, nightjar and woodcock. From the time of William the Conqueror, Ashdown Forest became a royal hunting ground and it was the Normans who introduced fallow deer to supplement the native red deer. William allowed commoners to continue to use the Forest in their traditional way. The sandy soil of the Forest was not suitable for growing crops and so the commoners grazed their domestic animals there. The existing commoners no longer keep their animals on the open, unenclosed Forest, because of the danger of traffic. Heath land that has not been grazed for many years is therefore reverting slowly back to woodland. The Conservators of the Forest have consequently enclosed large areas of the remaining open heath land to enable it to be grazed by sheep and cattle in safety. The animals eat any tree shoots emerging amongst the grass and bracken is kept in check by mowing. I chose to visit the Forest in August in order to catch the heather (or ling) and bell heather in full bloom and scent. The flowers of both species of heather are full of nectar and so are attractive to bees. Heather honey is much sought after, but beekeepers are not allowed to place hives on the common land of the Forest. They therefore put them in gardens and other land near to the heather bloom. Two other purple coloured flowers were prominent during my visit, namely, common knapweed (which is like a thistle but without the prickles) and spear thistle. By contrast, the flowers of the dwarf gorse shone a rich, golden yellow in the sunshine. I was lucky to see a silver spotted blue

butterfly flitting around a gorse bush. They are a declining species and rare outside heath lands of southern England. I failed to spot any reptiles during my visit. They are more likely to be caught unawares whilst they are still lethargic and warming up in the early morning sunshine. As for mammals, red deer have long since died out in the Forest, but fallow deer can still be found there. They keep under cover during the day but can often be seen grazing on privately owned fields at dawn and dusk. Unfortunately, many fall foul of traffic, particularly on the busy A22 road. As regards birds, I saw a buzzard circling lazily in the thermals above the open heath land. The prey of the buzzard includes reptiles, as was once shown on a BBC TV "Springwatch" programme. However, this particular bird did not appear to be hunting and the reptiles that I had failed to spot were, for the moment, safe. I also spotted a male yellow hammer on a gorse bush and heard its characteristic call. The species is one of the few still singing in the countryside in August. I also spotted male stonechat on a gorse bush. The male sports a black head, a white collar and buff breast feathers. Stonechats (of the same family as the robin) have a long breeding season and the bird I saw may have still been feeding young in a nest at the base of the gorse bush. In due course I headed back to my car in the Gills Lap car park. Families were having picnics on the grass and elderly couples were sitting side by side in garden chairs. In the hot sun and under a blue sky there was a holiday atmosphere about the place. Mr Whippy was doing a roaring trade. Among his customers were two cyclists, fully kitted out as if for the Tour de France, a white van man and an elderly gentleman in a Panama hat. I strolled over to a notice board which stated that A A Milne's stories about Winnie-the-Pooh were based on nearby geographical features. Some distance away is Pooh Sticks Bridge which spans a tributary of the River Medway. (Details from the Ashdown Forest Centre on 01342 823583). As I finished off my Raspberry Ripple, I decided that I should make another trip to Ashdown Forest, with the hope of seeing a nightjar and a woodcock. Both species put on spectacular breeding displays during evenings in the spring. I would aim to join a visit organised by Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Joe Ennis

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RAINHAM IN THE OPENING MONTHS OF WORLD WAR I

When war broke out in the Summer of 1914 life in Rainham continued normally with various annual events taking place like the Rainham Fete, Flower Show and the Council School prize giving day. The first war related activity took place in late July when girls at the Church of England School were asked to bring a penny each which provided linen for a bandage ready for hospital use to treat wounded soldiers and sailors. Soon after this 106 parishioners were sworn in as special constables at the School. Their job was to patrol Rainham during the war and seek out possible German spies. A committee led by The Lion Inn publican Phil Curling acting as chief of Staff oversaw this.

During August Rainham parish councillors made a house to house collection for the Prince of Wales War Fund which raised £100. A recruiting rally held in Rainham Church Hall followed to persuade local men to join the forces and fight in the war. Speakers included local MP Mr Granville-Wheeler and captain A G Hendry. A second rally took place in early September outside the Church School in Station Road. Later in October the East Kent Yeomanry held a recruiting rally in Station Road and six men joined up. These were William Barrett, Seymour Wilkins and Tom Russell from Station Road, Len Belsey and Frank Brock from Orchard Street and Sid Finn from Moor Street.

In September the first war casualties were announced with the deaths of servicemen Tom Anderson, Ernie Carter, Joe French, John Wood and Wilfred Ray. At about this time the tenor bell in Rainham church tower rang out at noon every day so that people could remember and pray for those men fighting in the war. In October a powerful explosion in the High Street initially thought to be a German bomb, turned out to be the result of a gas leak in the scullery of The Lion Inn which injured Mrs Curling who was working there at the time. As Mrs Curling lit the stove the resulting explosion threw her across the room causing her to suffer shock and bruising. A month later a huge explosion on the River Medway rocked the village when HMS Bulwark exploded and sank to the bottom of the river with the loss of 750 men. In December the body of a sailor from the ship washed up at Bartlett's Creek in Lower Rainham.

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Moves were made in November to raise money for Belgian refugees after the Germans had invaded the country. Garments were made for Belgian children by the local branch of the Girls Friendly Society led by vicar's wife Mrs Tamplin. The garments were packed and sent to the Belgian refugee headquarters in London. A concert by Rainham Co-operative Society in aid of the Belgian Refugees Fund at the Council School followed this. This resulted in £28 being raised for the fund and supplemented with a further £2 after publican Phil Curling had set up a match fund by selling boxes of matches for 1d a box.

As the war progressed people soon realized that the conflict would last for much longer than weeks. Instead, it became a bloody war of attrition with huge casualties and both sides getting bogged down in trench warfare that lasted for four years.

David Wood.

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QUIZ NIGHT

Medway Neighbourhood Watch Association 'Quiz Night' is on Friday 26th September. This is a fun event, in aid of the Association, open to all members of the public, you don't have to be a member of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme to participate! It will take place at the United Services Club, 171 High Street, Rainham, ME8 8AY. Doors open at 7pm, for a 7.30pm start. Tickets are £5 per person. Bring your own nibbles, but all drinks must be bought at the bar open 7pm - 11pm. Tea and coffee also available for purchase. Ideally teams of 6 - 8 (maximum) with cash prize for winning team. The Quiz Night will consist of 8 Rounds and a Bonus Round. To book tickets and for further information please telephone the Office on 01634 792131 or secretarymnwha@outlook.com. Tickets will also be available on the night, at the door.

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Diary 2014

September 20th - Beginners Birdwatching for adults
(autumn) Riverside Country Park, 11.00am - 12noon
classroom based, 1.00 - 3.00pm field based, £5 per
person, 01634 337432

September 20th & 27th - Netball for Junior Players,
Rainham School for Girls Netball Centre Taster
Sessions, 10.30 - 11.30am, £2 per session, Book 01634
364039 or email mcccandless.07@hotmail.co.uk

September 20th - Wine & Wisdom, 7.30pm, St
Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, bring
own drinks and nibbles, Tables 6 - 8 people, £5 pp,
Phone 01634 387793 or 01634 387425 details / tickets.

September 20th - September Miscellany, Upchurch
Choral Society, 7.30pm, St Mary's Church, Upchurch,
£5 at the door or contact Sally Chalmers 01634 305450
Interval Refreshments

September 20th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 6th).

September 21st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, Meet Anne Reed & Carole Shepherd 07748
822818, Wouldham Recreation Ground car park,
Knowle Road ME1 3XS GR 713637 For a 4.5 mile
moderate circular walk. No dogs

September 21st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet
Ray 01634 315967 Capstone Park lower car park (by
the lake) TQ778654 ME73JG. for a 4.5 mile walk in
area of SSSI, good views in places. Pub at end.

September 21st - Woodland Open Day, Ranscombe Farm
Reserve, 12noon, Email ranscombe@plantlife.org.uk

September 21st - Quiz Evening, 7.30pm, Rainham
Oasthouse, admission £2.50 (£2 members) for details
ring Maggi 01634 710553.

September 22nd - Rainham Wives, Evening of Fun
Exercising with Maureen, (see 15th Sept).

September 23rd - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch
Village Hall, 9.30am, Members £1.50, Guests £2, New
Members Welcome. For details email Chairman David
Powell davidpowell15@hotmail.co.uk

September 24th - Coffee Morning, 10.00am - 12 midday,

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September 24th - Potato Competition Weigh In,
Gillingham Horticultural Society 7.30pm, United
Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road ME7 4PU,
details 01634 852519

September 24th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
Birthday Social, (see 10th Sept).

September 25th - Rainham Community Friendship
Group, St Margaret's Millennium Hall, 1.30 - 3.30pm
Cuppa and biscuits provided (£1 fee) (see 10th Sept)

September 25th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service &
presentation of local calendar plus poetry, Pam Penfold,
(see 11th Sept).

September 25th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside,
7.30pm, ring Sylvia Wildridge 01634 312038

September 25th - Medway Neighbourhood Watch
Association Quiz Night, United Services Club, 171
High Street, Rainham, 7.30pm start. Tickets £5 pp.
Bring own nibbles, all drinks from the bar, teams 6 - 8
cash prize for winning team. Details 01634 792131 or
secretarymnhwa@outlook.com

September 25th - Rochester Swing Preservation Society
special guest, guitarist/vocalist Steve Galler The
Hastings Arms Function Room. Lower Rainham Road,
Free parking, 8.30pm start. Admission £7, plus raffle.
Everyone welcome details 01634 712217

September 26th - Medway Geographical Society, Byron
Road School, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.00pm 'A Pacific
Scrapbook' - Colin Burring, All welcome, 01634
632683.

September 27th - Money Management Course, 10am -
1pm, St Matthew's (see 20th Sept)

September 27th - Produce Sale and Crafts St. Margaret's
Church, Lower Halstow 2.00 - 4.00pm, wide range of
home grown and home made produce and crafts.
Refreshments available, www.thesix.org.uk

September 27th - Wigmore MADS concert 'As long as we
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Diary 2014

September 28th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet
Tony/Ann 01634 406634, Car park behind Linton

Church: TQ754501 ME17 4AW for a 4.5 mile walk
September 28th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
2.00pm Meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847

828249 Grays Tearoom, Brenchley Road, Brenchley
For a 3.5 mile easy stroll around Brenchley No dogs

September 29th - Monday Hub, (see 15th Sept).

September 29th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 15th Sept)

September 29th - Rainham Wives, "Growing Old
Disgracefully & More", talk by June Faulkner. (15th)

October 2nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Musical
entertainment (guitar & vocal), Steve Erickson, (11th)

October 3rd - Lower Halstow Games Afternoon,
Memorial Hall, 2.00 - 4.00pm, all welcome, £1.50 a
visit play games or have a chat.

October 3rd - R.N.L.I Gillingham Branch 60th
Anniversary dinner, Howard Memorial Hall, Wigmore
7.00pm. Tickets £20 each, details or a menu, contact

Diana Lawrence, 356 Beechings Way, Rainham ME8
7BG, 01634 388635 or dianalawrence@tiscali.co.uk

October 3rd - Ghost tours at Fort Amherst, Dock Road,
Chatham, 7.30 & 8.30pm, approx 1 hour, Tickets £10
per person, not suitable under 8 years, to book tickets

visit www.fortamherst.com

October 4th - Chatham Grammar School for Girls,
Annual Reunion Lunch Pre-lunch drinks 12.30pm,
lunch, 1.00pm, Tickets £25 write enclosing cheque, to
The Treasurer, Chatham Grammar Association, 37

Homefield Drive, Gillingham, ME8 8RS.

October 4th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 6th Sept).

October 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Mo Fleisig 07976 600393 Bearsted (park around
the Green) GR 803558 ME14 4DL for 6.5 mile

moderate mainly flat walk with some hills, No dogs

October 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet
Ade 01634 306405, in The Square Hadlow by the bus
stop. TQ634498 TN11 0DA for a 6.5 mile walk. Bring
picnic lunch. Pub at end with lunches available.

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October 6th - Rainham Wives, 'Pioneering Debutantes
To Present Day WI Presidents' talk by Barbara Stevens,
(see 15th Sept).

October 7th - 11th - Hairspray, GODS in association
with NODA, Hazlitt Arts Centre Maidstone, 7.30pm
Saturday matinee 2.30pm, Tickets £11.50 and £13.50,
www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk 01622 758611

October 7th - Floral Art Group, Little Things, (see 16th)

October 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30 pm
Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Hardy
Geraniums - Jacqueline Avolet, New members
welcome, ring 366276 for details.

October 8th - Bredhurst WI, John Mills - The History of
Capital Punishment, (see 10th Sept).

October 8th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Food, my
career as a Food Economist - Patricia Davy, (see 10th)

October 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Indian Sari
Fabrics, Julia Davies, (see 11th Sept).

October 10th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History
Society, 'Policing in Kent' - Roy Ingleton, (see 12th)

October 11th - Knowledge & Nibbles Evening, St
Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm Food
provided bring own drinks & glasses, Tables of 8, £6
pp, Advance booking essential, 230430 or 379796

October 12th - Lions Club Harvest Teas for Seniors of
Rainham, 3.30 - 6.00pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham
ring 01634 379062 or 373840 to book a free place.

October 18th - Songs & Anthems for Autumn, Kent
Chamber Choir, 7.30pm, St. Mary the Virgin,
Upchurch, Tickets £10 (£5 children and students) on
the door or 01634 361508, or 01795 481694

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