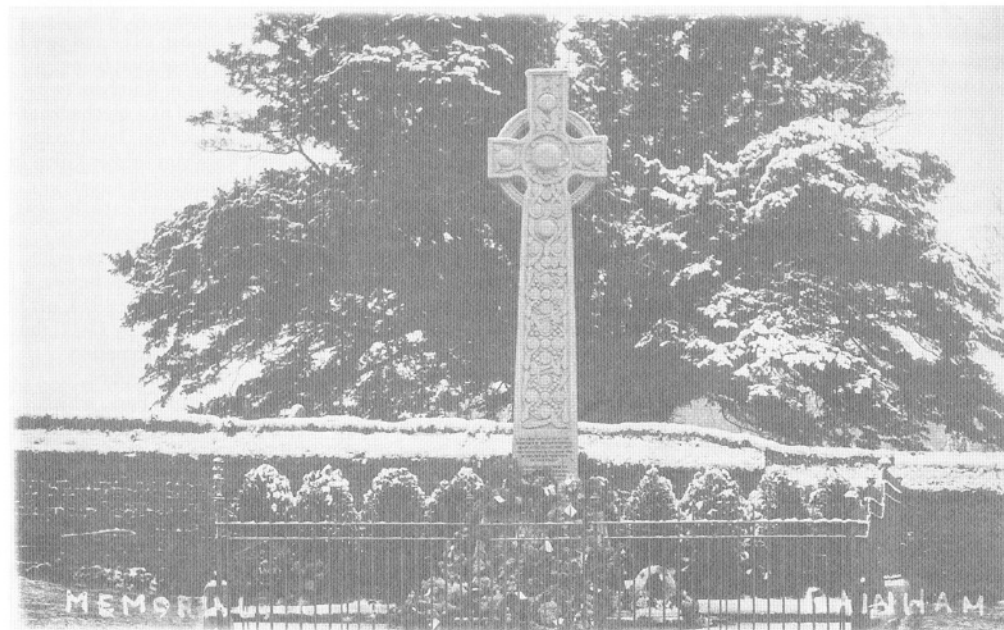


# ACTION FORUM

NOVEMBER 2014

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■

NUMBER 504



A replica of the Cross of Iona on the island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland was chosen for the War Memorial in Rainham High Street. The eighteen and a half foot tall cross was unveiled and dedicated on December 12th 1920 in front of a large crowd who filled the surrounding roads. It was the last service conducted by the vicar the Rev John Mainwaring Tamplin, who struggled from his sickbed determined to take the service and died shortly after. Two of the Horse Chestnut trees planted by the landlord of the White Horse, Mr Adie, had to be removed to make way for the memorial and the railings were sacrificed to the Second World War metal appeal and have never been replaced.

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Next Issue December 6th 2014  
Copy Date: Nov 25th Ads Nov 28th  
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21 Station Rd, Rainham ME8 7RS  
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## Editorial

Whoever had the idea for the haunting artistic display entitled 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red' a mass of poppies surrounding the Tower of London as a tribute to those who gave their lives fighting in the First World War is to be congratulated. A blood red flower for each life lost really brings home the folly of the whole disaster. It is such a simple but evocative sight, well worth a visit if you find yourself in London. The whole concept is very well thought out, the ceramic poppies have gradually been 'planted' since August 5th, the first full day of conflict, encapsulating the four years of misery into a few short weeks, as the river crept around the moat. They will remain there until after the November 11th Remembrance Services and will then gradually be removed and posted to those who have purchased them as a permanent memorial. If all the 888,246 poppies are sold many millions of pounds net profit will be raised and divided amongst six military charities including the British Legion. The flowers were created by ceramic artist Paul Cummins, with setting by stage designer Tom Piper. A really moving tribute but already the authorities at the Tower are wondering how to top this to celebrate the armistice in four years time. All I can think is a miniature national flag to represent each life lost but it would not have the same impact as the 'river of blood'.

We are indebted to David Wood for contributing a series of articles containing fascinating information about people from Rainham who were caught up in the conflict. The suffering becomes real when local names and homes are identified. Jonathan Saunders is also keenly interested in that period and anxious to trace the heritage of the one unknown name, W.G. Lockyer, from our War Memorial. If you have any information to help please do get in touch. As usual at this time of year our diary is filled with dates for Christmas Fayres and Sales, Churches, schools and social groups all work hard throughout the year preparing treats to be sold in aid of their particular good cause. The money raised is often used locally so helping our community. If you are able to do pick out those in your area and go along to enjoy the fun and help support the volunteers' efforts. I am sure you will be made very welcome. Only a month to go and Christmas will be very much on our minds so until then have a very good month,

get outside if the weather permits to admire the autumn colours, and we will be with you again in December.

## Correspondence

WW1 in RAINHAM

Dear Editor,

Thank you to David Wood for his interesting article on Rainham in the opening months of WW1. David mentions Special Constables and the search for German spies. One such victim of the constabulary was Heinrich Sohlar, a pottery worker at Wakeley Brothers. He was arrested in October 1914 and sent to an internment camp. His crime, other than being German, was that when he arrived in Rainham two years earlier, he had briefly worked as a mechanic at Otterham Quay. Whilst it is correct for David to say Tom Anderson was the first Rainham soldier killed in World War 1, he was not Rainham's first Great War "killed in action". The first known casualty was Chief Stoker John Wood (I assume no relation to David) of HMS Pathfinder, who lived with his wife and 5 year old son at 99 Station Road. Just before 4 o'clock in the afternoon of 5th September 1914, off St. Abb's Head, HMS Pathfinder was sunk by U-21, thus becoming the first victim of modern submarine warfare. The widow of John Wood, Caroline, remarried and left Rainham for Grove Park, which may explain why his name like several other Rainham-folk who made the ultimate sacrifice, is not listed on Rainham's War Memorial.

Interesting to note that following their move from Luton (Chatham), the Anderson family were very much part of Rainham, however Tom himself most likely never lived in Rainham, having left employment in Chatham to enlist in 1905.

Moving forward to July 1915, stories of German atrocities in Belgium had been reported in the British press. Three boys from Rainham were summoned before the Children's Court at Sittingbourne for having punched and kicked another boy so hard he had been off school for a fortnight. Their defence that they had been playing at being German's was accepted by the Magistrate and the case was dismissed!

If any readers have knowledge of W.G. Lockyer, who appears on Rainham's War Memorial and the British Standard Cement Memorial at Riverside Country Park, I would be interested to hear from them. He remains the one name that has not been positively identified on Rainham's War Memorial.

Yours sincerely  
Jonathan Saunders  
jes\_glc@hotmail.com

OASTHOUSE THEATRE

Dear Editor

As winter draws on there is plenty to brighten the dark evenings at the Oasthouse Theatre on November 7th & 8th, at 8.00pm we present 'Back to the 50's' A revue performed by The RaTS Revellers.

An evening of nostalgia with a show packed full of

popular music and comedy from the fifties. So put on your dancing shoes and enjoy an evening with music from Buddy Holly and The Everly Brothers and comedy from The Goons and Max Miller!

On November 14th & 15th, at 8pm The Ratlets present 'A Christmas Carol' A musical play.

This traditional story based on the novel by Charles Dickens is an ideal treat for all the family. Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future. Will he change his ways or will he still shout 'Bah Humbug' at the very mention of Christmas. Come along and find out for yourself!

Box Office for both performances is 0844 8793224 or on-line [www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk)

In May 2015 I will be directing a play at the Oasthouse Theatre, 'Lilies on the Land' by Lions Part. This moving play is based on 150 letters and interviews with original Land Girls from the period and the play provides a revealing, funny and wonderfully moving portrait of some of Britain's pluckiest unsung heroes.

I would be interested to hear from any readers who were Land Girls during World War Two. It would be interesting to hear their stories and perhaps they could come along to the theatre and share their experiences as this will help the actresses who are taking part in the play to give a more realistic portrayal of what it was like being a Land Girl. If you are able to help then please get in touch either via e-mail at [deanjcaston@gmail.com](mailto:deanjcaston@gmail.com) or call 01634 374183.

Yours sincerely  
Dean Caston  
Public Relations Manager

### THE WIGMORE LECTURES

Wigmore Library, Fairview Avenue  
Tickets £3.75, Booking 01634 337799

Wednesday 19th November, 8.00pm

Dr Ann Kneif - The History of Kentish Seaside Resorts Until the First World War

The therapeutic value of seawater was known in Tudor times and by the early years of the 18th century the wealthy were drawn to a few small towns around the English coasts. This was the beginning of the seaside resort. It was not until the Bank Holiday Act of 1871 that the seaside became easily accessible to the working classes. The talk looks at how people travelled, accommodation, bathing (and especially the use of bathing machines), beach occupations as well as seaside entertainments.

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### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Hands in Gillingham is a Medway based Charity providing services for those who feel socially isolated and need support to help them be part of their wider community. We are currently looking for volunteers for our one to one Community Befriending, Gardening and Transport Services.

For any further information please get in touch with us on 01634 577984 or email [enquiries@gillinghamvolunteercentre.com](mailto:enquiries@gillinghamvolunteercentre.com)

### NEWINGTON CONCERT PARTY

We are looking for somebody to join us who is willing to act as stagehand when we present our annual show at Newington and Sheppey. You will be responsible for pulling curtains, changing scenery, props, possibly sound and lighting, and generally helping out where needed. You will be made very welcome. If interested please call our Chairman Derek Friday 01795 873056

### BROMPTON HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP

Historic Dockyard No.1 Smithery, Holl Room  
Thursday 27th November, 7.00pm

Talk: Valour, Loss & Sacrifice

The talk by Pam Wood is a personal view, relating to the sinking of HMS's Hogue, Cressy and Aboukir by the German submarine U9 on the 22nd September 1914 and the effect that it had on the people of Medway, also touching on the 26th November 1914 when there was an explosion that shook the area, physically and emotionally, with the news that HMS Bulwark had blown up. Tickets £3, Booking essential, 01634 351834 or email [witch21@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:witch21@blueyonder.co.uk)

### SILVER SURFERS

Free 'Silver Surfers' beginners IT courses at Rainham School for Girls, next year on Wednesdays 14th, 21st, 28th January and 4th & 11th February from 3.15pm - 4.15pm. Either complete beginners, or just a bit 'rusty'. Help from our students. Computers available or bring your own. Contact Mrs Moon 01634 362746

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# Diary 2014

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Copy should be in writing either by email to  
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Meresborough, Gillingham, Kent ME8 8PP

Diary Copy Date: 25th November

November 1st – 29th - Art Exhibition, Paintings by Local Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman, Rainham Library, Birling Avenue  
November 1st – St Margaret's Bazaar, 10.00am – 2.30pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, 50p, 01795 475907  
November 1st - Centenary Celebratory Concert, Kentish Players, 7.30pm, Central Theatre, Chatham, Tickets £15 (£12 Concessions) from 01634 338338  
November 1st - Hempstead Table-Top Boot Fair, Village Hall, 11.00am – 3.00pm, contact 01634 377177  
November 1st—Upchurch Fireworks, gates open 5.30pm Westmoor Farm, A2, Rainham, Adults £7, under 16 £5, Family ticket £20 pay at the gate -correct money please.  
November 1st - Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30 – 10pm, new and experienced dancers welcome, with or without a partner, call 01634 366189 or 388546  
November 2nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10am, meet Roger Norman 01634 232404 Shipbourne, The Common, Upper Green Road TN11 9PE, 5 mile moderate walk, No toilets at start, No dogs  
November 3rd – Rainham Wives, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, 8.00pm, 'Wild & West', talk by Chris Wade, New members welcome, £2 per visit includes refreshments, details Sue 01634 230639.  
November 4th - Every Tuesday 7.30pm & Wednesday 10 -11.30am Reiki and energy healing is freely given. Donations welcome The Centre, next to Travelodge, M2 Services, Farthing Corner, Rainham ME8 8PQ  
November 4th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Adam was a gardener, the Church and gardens - William Butcher, New members welcome, ring 366276 for details.  
November 4th – Floral Art Group United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30 – 9.00pm, 'Guy Fawkes', contact Kaye 01634 232998.  
November 5th – Twydall Community Friendship Group, Holy Trinity Church Hall, 1.30 – 3.30pm Cuppa and biscuits - £1, Twydall Quiz, details 01634 577984 or email community@gillinghamvolunteercentre.com

November 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Mike, car park Wingham High Street, CT3 1BN for 7 mile Four Watermills walk Bring picnic, Pubs at end.  
November 6th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Bon Marche Fashions & Barnardo's Sale, Village Hall, 2 – 4.00pm. 01634 366907 New members always welcome  
November 6th – Wigmore Thursday Club, The Trouble with Trevor, Ley Liberson, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2pm, for over 50s, ring 01634 235507  
November 7th - 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, details Julie 01634 364309  
November 7th - Lower Halstow Games Afternoon, Memorial Hall, 2.00 – 4.00pm, all welcome, £1.50 a visit, play games or have a chat.  
November 7th - every first Sunday of month Service with Guest Mediums, Entrance £1.50, raffle £1, 6.30 – 8.30pm, The Centre, next to Travelodge, M2 Services, Farthing Corner, Rainham ME8 8PQ  
November 7th & 8th - Oasthouse Theatre, Back to the 50's' A revue performed by The RaTS Revellers, 8pm. Box Office 08448 793224 www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk  
November 8th - Christmas Craft Fair, St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow, 1.00 – 3.00pm, Refreshments available, crafts, gifts and home baking, Edith May' barge Winter Tea Room open 10.00am – 4.00pm.  
November 8th - Winter Wonderland, St Matthew's Church, Wigmore, 11.00am – 3.00pm Visit Father Christmas, Mulled wine, hot dogs and mince pies, Entrance 50p - Children free  
November 8th - Annual Craft Fair, Rainham Evening WI, 10.30am – 2.30pm, Millennium Centre, Good selection of tables, Refreshments, Admission 30p  
November 8th - Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm, Twydall Church Hall, Teams of up to 8 - £5 pp, Bring own drinks and nibbles, Free Tea, Coffee and Biscuits, Festive Raffle, ring 01634 233405 or 01634 375486

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**Wednesday March 11th 2015 - Improvers**

November 8th – Instep Dancing, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, 8.00 – 11.00pm, for Ballroom – Latin – Sequence Dancing, details 01634 363738 s.collins02@btinternet.com  
November 9th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Graham 07989 753278, Wateringbury public car park off Bow Road near the traffic lights for 10.05 bus to Tonbridge ME18 5DD 10 mile perfect walk for those who hate hills. Bring picnic lunch., Pub at end.  
November 9th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Patricia Daniels 07960 295164, Wye High Street car park opposite the Church TN25 5ES, 7 mile moderate walk around Crundale, Memorial Crown undulating to hilly may be muddy, dogs allowed  
November 10th – Monday Hub, St Paul's Church, Parkwood, 10.00am – 12.30pm, light refreshments, conversation, games, all welcome, ring 01634 230780  
November 10th – Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, all Mondays 2 – 4.30pm, new members welcome, 01634 230500  
November 10th - 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 10th - Medway Organ Club Concert, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm, Organist - Michael Wooldridge ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694  
November 10th – Rainham Wives, 'History of Royal Variety Performance', talk by Dean Caston, (3rd Nov).  
November 11th – Gillingham & District Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, 'A Year in the Life of a Beekeeper – Talk by Terry Clare, 01634 852519.  
November 11th - Medway Antique and Collectors' Club, History of Bricks and Brickworks – Richard Filmer, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 8.00pm visitors welcome medwayantiquespublicity@virginmedia.com  
November 12th – All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8pm, Doty Diva - Michelle etc, for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444  
November 12th – Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall, Gilly Roper - Bradbourne Group Riding for the Disabled, visitors welcome, For details 01634 389966  
November 12th – Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm Upchurch Village Hall, Demonstration 'The 'F' Factor' Trish Bashford 01795 472973 or 01634 863034

November 13th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Kingfisher Singers, (see 6th Nov).  
November 13th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Games, tea and chat (see 6th Nov).  
November 13th - Medway Inter Faith Action, Medway Council Meeting Room, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, 7.30pm all welcome, ring Hugh Hawkins 01634 843307 or email julihugh@tiscali.co.uk  
November 13th - Donn Barcott Band, 44Two Sports and Social Club, Featherby Road, Gillingham, 8.30 – 11.00pm, Admission £6, Details 01634 405037  
November 14th - UpARA Monthly Meeting, Upchurch Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2, New Members Welcome, details email Chairman David Powell davidrpowell5@hotmail.co.uk  
November 14th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History Society, Byron Road Primary School, Gillingham, 7.15pm. 'Celebration of Christmas' - Anne Carter, Visitors welcome for a small charge, details Ron Baker 01634 854982 email r.baker1234@btinternet.com  
November 14th & 15th - A Christmas Carol', a musical play by The Ratlets, Oasthouse Theatre, 8.00pm. Box Office 0844 8793224 or www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk  
November 15th, Rainham South Councillors surgery at Parkwood Community Centre 9.30am – 12noon, no appointment necessary.  
November 15th - Grand Christmas Craft Market, Millennium Centre, Rainham, 9.00am -12.30pm, 25 quality stalls and refreshments. Free entry, Contact Tony Andrews 01634 371941.  
November 15th - Race Night, St Matthews Church Hall, Drewery Drive, 7.00pm, 25 Parkwood Sq ATC, Tickets £5 pp All proceeds for Air Cadets. For details ring 01634 328888 or 01634 388713  
November 15th - Medway Folk Dance Club (see 1st Nov)  
November 16th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Frank/Mim, Upchurch Golf Club, Oak Lane ME9 7BB for 5 mile pleasant circular walk  
November 16th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet David Brown 01634 373833, Grove Ferry pay & display car park CT3 4BP, 5 mile easy circular walk, generally flat but may be muddy.  
November 17th – Rainham Evening WI, 7.30pm, Millennium Centre, Mr Ian Porter 'Suffragettes' Competition – Gren/Purple/White, ring 01634 262577 for details.

Continued on Page 11

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# Rainham Soldiers World War 1 Experiences in 1914-1915

Of the soldiers from Rainham who joined up to fight for King and country some wrote letters home describing their experiences or were reported in local newspapers. With the war in full swing by the end of 1914, a December edition of the East Kent Gazette reported that Private Arthur Gore of the Royal West Surrey Regiment had returned home to 45 Ivy Street to recover from wounds sustained at the Battle of Ypres. The 21 year old had fought in trenches only fifteen yards from German positions and got shot in the head during heavy fighting. As he fell back another bullet struck him in the eye and he lay unconscious for five hours until he came around and managed to walk to a village about half a mile away where he received treatment. He was then sent to hospital in Le Havre where his damaged eye was removed then to the Royal Eye Hospital in Manchester for another operation before going home to Ivy Street to recover.

(To be continued next month) David Wood

# WINTER WONDERLAND

St Matthew's Church, Wigmore

Saturday 8th November, 11.00am - 3.00pm

Visit Father Christmas in his alpine grotto. An early Christmas event for the family. 50p - Children free

# CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR

St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow

Saturday 8th November, 1.00 - 3.00pm.

Refreshments, crafts, gifts and home baking.  
Winter Tea Room aboard the "Edith May" Sailing barge is open 10.00am - 4.00pm.

# GRAND CHRISTMAS CRAFT MARKET

Saturday 15th November, 9.00am - 12.30pm

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# CHRISTMAS FAIR

Upchurch Darby & Joan Club

Wednesday 19th November, 10.00am - 12 noon

Upchurch Village Hall Various Stalls &

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# CHRISTMAS FETE

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Saturday 22nd November, 11.00am - 2.00pm

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# HEMPSTEAD CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Hempstead Village Fayre Committee in association

with All Saints' Church - Free Entry

Saturday, 22nd November, 11.30am - 3.30pm

Come and greet Father Christmas and his Elf at

11.30am, refreshments, Christmas stalls, Raffle.

# LOWER HALSTOW BAZAAR

On Saturday November 22nd at 11 o'clock 'The Snow Queen' will arrive on her faithful stead Bambi to open the Memorial Halls Christmas Bazaar.

# 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 Stalls available £15, for

further details contact Paula 01634 373450

or Stacey 07897 007979 Free entry, all welcome.

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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR OCTOBER

This month's Notes are about two bird watching trips I took recently on the motor vessel Julie Sue around the islands of marshland of the Medway Estuary to the north of Upchurch and Lower Halstow. The first was in late September, sailing from Otterham Quay. The trip had to take place at high tide and, consequently, the mud flats of the estuary were covered in water and the waders and other birds that feed there were resting on dry land and out of the cold North wind that was blowing. The birds were mainly at rest in the shelter of both man-made sea walls and the naturally occurring mud banks of the islands of marshland. Fortunately for us, the resting waders were easily viewed; they were lined up for us and were not scared off by a slow moving boat that kept its distance. We saw good numbers of waders, including, redshank, lapwing, curlew, ringed plover, grey plover, both species of godwit and dunlin. We also noted other, more hardy birds that were sitting out the high tide, in the sunshine, in the open and facing into the wind. There were hundreds of avocets on a long, narrow mud bar and a number of cormorants and turnstones perched on abandoned barges. Turnstones can be seen scavenging for sand hoppers along the tide line at Seasalter and also on the quayside at Whitstable looking for any discarded remains of sea food.

Once we were out of the shelter of Otterham Creek and into the main channel of the Medway the wind would occasionally blow a spray of sea water into the open boat. We spotted the ochre coloured sails of the Thames sailing barge Cambria, which was launched at Greenhithe in 1906. It was tacking across Long Reach as it attempted to make headway against the North wind. As we sailed by the islands of marshland we could see the sea walls that were breached by high tides a little over a hundred years ago; these breaches brought to an end hundreds of years of agriculture on fresh water marshland that has since reverted to salt marshes. They have now been left to the birdwatchers and the wildfowling. As usual, at lunch time, Ray Wade, the owner and skipper of the Julie Sue, provided hot tea and, as a supplement to our

sandwiches, a generous helping of hot bread pudding. The latter is just the food to satisfy an appetite brought on by the sea air and the cold wind. Ray is ex Royal Navy, lives in Rainham and also takes out anglers. He can be contacted, after 7pm in the evening, on 233957. On the way back to Otterham Quay we came across a number of low flying swallows. I am always delighted at the sight of these birds, but when they are migrating, that elation is tinged with some sadness. Our trip in early October was from Gillingham Pier. We were lucky to have another sunny day but no wind, just a gentle breeze. By the time we reached the island of marshland to the north of Upchurch and Lower Halstow, the tide had dropped and areas of mudflat were exposed. The mud is a rich source of food for waders and other birds, which feed on lugworms and rag worms; molluscs such as cockles and marine snails; and crustaceans such as shrimps and crabs. We saw much the same species of waders as on our previous trip, but in greater numbers, as a result of the better weather and the low tide. Large number of waders and other birds attract raptors and we witnessed two scenes showing nature red in tooth and claw. We spotted a peregrine falcon carrying a teal, a small duck, as it alighted on the derelict Bess Ness Jetty. Peregrines are often seen on natural history television programmes, nesting on urban buildings and feeding largely on pigeons. The second scene featured a storm petrel which is a tiny, sooty-black seabird. This particular bird had presumably spent the breeding season on the west coast of Britain or around the coast of Ireland and was intending to migrate to seas off western or southern Africa. It had clearly lost its way and was exhausted. As we left the spot, a marsh harrier (which normally preys on rabbits and other small mammals) was circling around the storm petrel which was, I am afraid, doomed. The River Medway supports a wide range of fish species such as herring, bass, grey mullet and flounder. The estuary also provides a habitat in which small fish like gobies and young fish of herring, for example, find shelter and food. We saw much evidence, during our trip, of the bounty of the river. Black headed gulls were feeding on small fish forced to the surface by schools of bass which were pursuing

them. Little egrets were picking off small fish which the incoming tide was bringing into the shallows. Great crested grebes and little grebes (dabchicks) were diving for fish large and small. Hundreds of well fed cormorants were resting and drying their wings on Bess Ness Jetty. Finally, we came across twelve rotund grey seals hauled out of the water onto the high mud banks lining Damhead Creek, which leads to Kingsnorth Power Station. From their vantage point the seals could see humans approaching but they were fairly relaxed about a passing boat. They would have been feeding, in the creek, on grey mullet. Because of the state of the tide, we arrived back at Gillingham Pier somewhat late in the day, just after a glorious sunset above Chatham Dockyard. Flocks of curlew and Brent geese, among other birds that had been feeding on the estuary, were flying low over the water towards their roosts on Nor Marsh. Black headed gulls that had been feeding on the fields of the North Downs or the Hoo Peninsula were flying higher in the sky, many in V formation. It was the end of another enjoyable trip on the Julie Sue.

Joe Ennis

## UPCHURCH FAMILY FIREWORKS

The Upchurch Fireworks has a history of raising money for local clubs and charities for over 30 years and Upchurch Scouts took over its organisation in 1996 when the previous village committee stepped down. Since then, its aim has been to raise funds for the Scout Group.

For many years it was held in The Paddock in the centre of the village but a requirement for a larger safety zone ruled this out in 2005, when we moved to the present site at Westmoor Farm, Rainham. As this site is on the main A2, it is highly visible with good on-site parking facilities and it has raised our profile and attendance considerably. We now expect an attendance of about 4,000 people for this event but are always aiming for more. We estimate our present capacity to be about 6,000 under our current layout but re-organisation could raise that. Safety is of major importance at an event like this and we use a professional company for the supply and firing of the Category 4 fireworks. Also, with so many people on a site of this size at night, the provision of power and lighting is clearly paramount. We use some small generators around the site for more remote lighting requirements but we also need a sizeable

supply for the main viewing and stalls area. We have power distribution for the main site but need a generator to drive it. For the last 3 years, MEMS have been kind enough to provide one FOC, with a 125A socket outlet. We simply plug our system into that. To assist us in our efforts, we are always looking for sponsorship from local businesses and suppliers. In response to such help (be it in cash or kind), we offer all our sponsors advertising: on our website, by means of banners on site, over the PA system during the event and would certainly like to do this for you. Complementary tickets are also available if you would like to have a look on the day. If you know of some other way we could assist in publicising your support, we would be pleased to hear it. Do look at our website ([www.upchurchfireworks.co.uk](http://www.upchurchfireworks.co.uk)) to see more details of our operation.

Obviously, the profitability of the event is weather dependent. The weather was bad in 2008 when we fired for about 250 people and made a major loss. In 2011, again the forecast was poor but we managed to cancel the event in sufficient time to control most of our losses. Nevertheless, when conditions are right, the benefits outweigh the occasional loss. The display supports the running of Upchurch Scout Group. We have a good brick-built hall which replaced a 30+ year old rotten timber hut in the 1990's and the Fireworks have been an integral part of the funding for both its construction and maintenance. Sections of Scouts, Girl Guides and Church Lads Brigade meet in the hall regularly, with a combined membership in excess of 100 youngsters. In the last year, we had to replace the hall gas heater at short notice when it failed in the middle of the winter. This year, we spent about £1,500 on tents and a gas urn for camps, and the financial ability to readily replace the fridge-freezer when it failed was reassuring. We also ensure we have a direct effect on the children by supporting various camps and outings. Plans for the future include the refurbishment of the kitchen and improved storage facilities. In essence, the money raised by Fireworks Night enables the Group to continue to operate in a planned and stable manner, to the benefit of the many children who attend the various sections. The security given by Fireworks Night enables us to plan for the future in a positive manner. (Saturday 1st November, gates open 5.30pm, Adult £7, ul6 £5, Family £20 pay at the gate)

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## Diary 2014

November 17th - Rainham Wives, 'A Dickens of a  
Christmas' musical talk by Mick Lynn, (see 3rd Nov).

November 18th - Coffee Morning & Sale, Macklands  
House, Station Road, Rainham in aid of Coeliac  
disease, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Lots of bargains

November 18th - Floral Art Group 'Remembrance', (see  
4th Nov).

November 18th - RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,  
Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 -  
9.45pm £3. Travels to Shetland in search of phalaropes  
- Adam Rowlands. www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

November 19th - Twydall Community Friendship Lunch,  
£2, Church Hall, 12.30 - 2.30pm, (see 5th Nov).

November 19th - Hempstead Active Retirement  
Association (HempstARA), Scout Hall, Duke's  
Meadow Drive, 2.00pm

November 19th - Bredhurst Garden Club 7.30pm, Village  
Hall, illustrated talk Ms Diana Lawrence 'The RNLI',  
new members welcome ring 233554 for details.

November 19th - The Wigmore Lectures, Wigmore  
Library, Fairview Avenue, Tickets £3.75, Booking  
01634 337799, 8.00pm, Dr Ann Kneif - 'The History of'  
Kentish Seaside Resorts until the First World War

November 20th - Hempstead Leisure Club Royal Visits to  
Kent part 2 - Colin Breed, (see 6th Nov).

November 20th - Wigmore Thursday Club, A Calendar of  
Flowers, Christine Pope, (see 6th Nov).

November 20th - Rainham Women's Institute, Methodist  
Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham, 1.45 - 4.00pm,  
Speaker on "ACWW", Visitors welcome for small entry  
charge per visit, ring 01634 366276 for details.

November 21st - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club,  
Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Brandon Allen/  
Quintin Collins Quintet, Admission £10, enquiries  
01634 365352 or 07544 312743

November 22nd - RAMASES, 2.30pm, Newington  
Village Hall, Wine and Wisdom, Members £6, Guests  
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November 22nd - Lower Halstow Christmas Bazaar,  
11 o'clock 'The Snow Queen' arrives on Bambi.

November 22nd - Christmas Fete, Bredhurst Cats  
Adoption Centre, Matts Hill Road, ME9 7XA, 11.00am  
- 2.00pm, In new Heated and Floored Marquees, Hot  
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November 22nd - Hempstead Christmas Fayre, Village  
Hall and Church, 11.30am - 3.30pm, Father Christmas  
arrives 11.30am, Free Entry.

November 22nd - City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra  
Concert, 7.30pm, Central Theatre, Chatham, Tickets  
from £10 (Adults) £1 (Under 18yrs) Box office 01634  
338338 www.medwayticketslive.co.uk

November 23rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, meet John Trebill 01634 244045, East  
Peckham behind Methodist Church off Pound Road GR  
667485 TN12 5AU, 5 mile easy walk. No dogs

November 23rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet  
Graham 07989 753278, front of Brenchley Church,  
TN12 7NL for 6 mile walk, fairly flat, some styles.

November 23rd - Christmas Craft and Food Fair, 11.00am  
- 4.00pm, Newington Village Hall, ME9 7JJ, to book a  
stall, or details Katie 01795 844949 or 07871 934848.

November 23rd - Arts & Crafts Christmas Fayre, Howard  
Memorial Hall, Wigmore, 10.30am to 3.00pm, Free

November 24th - Monday Hub, (see 10th Nov).

November 24th - Medway Scabble Club, (see 10th Nov).

November 24th - Rainham Wives, local Calendar for  
charity presented by Pam Penfold, (see 3rd Nov).

November 25th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch  
Village Hall, 9.30am, Members £1.50, Guests £2, New  
Members Welcome, davidrpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

November 26th - Festive Meeting, Gillingham  
Horticultural Society, United Reformed Church Hall,  
Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, Presentation

Autumn Show Trophies by Deputy Mayor. Members  
£2, Visitors £3, details 01634 852519

November 27th - Rainham Community Friendship  
Group, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, 1.30 -  
3.30pm Cuppa and biscuits £1, Local History talk,  
details Lance at Hands in Gillingham 01634 577984 or  
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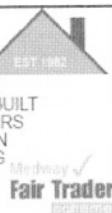
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## Diary 2014

November 27th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service  
followed by a Singalong, (see 6th Nov).  
November 27th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Games tea  
and chat (see 6th Nov).  
November 27th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and  
Miniaturist Group, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside,  
7.30pm, ring Sylvia Wildridge 01634 312038  
November 28th - Deanwood Primary School Christmas  
Fayre, 3.15 - 5.30pm Entrance Adults 50p, Children  
30p, Pre School - Free, stalls t.kington@btinternet.com  
November 28th - Medway Geographical Society, Byron  
Road School, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.00pm 'Geology,  
Landscapes and Natural History of Hawaii' - Mrs  
Vicky Golding. All welcome, contact 01634 632683.  
November 29th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438, 7 mile  
moderate London Bridges Walk, No dogs  
November 29th - Christmas Craft and Gift Fair for Great  
Ormond Street Children's Hospital, Rainham School for  
Girls, 9.30am - 2.30pm. Stalls available, £15, details  
Paula 01634 373450 or Stacey 07897 007979. Free  
November 29th - Trend 'N' Blend, Rainham Flower Club,  
Christmas Floral Art, 2pm, Newington Village Hall,  
Tickets £10 Ring 01795 472073 or 01634 863034  
November 29th - Hartlip Church Christmas Fair, Village  
Hall, 2.00 - 5.00pm  
November 29th - Hempstead Carol Service & Lighting of  
the Christmas Tree, 6.30pm, shops in Hempstead Road,  
all welcome, collecting toiletries for Medway Hospital.  
November 29th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (1st Nov).  
November 30th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am  
meet Geoff 07525 161766, free public car park in  
Lower Upnor ME2 4XB for 5 mile walk with a steepish  
climb, Pub at end with lunches available  
November 30th - Traditional Christmas Craft Fayre,  
Meredale Independent Primary School, Solomon Road,  
Rainham, 12noon - 3.00pm, for stalls 01634 231405  
November 30th - Traditional Christmas Market,  
Bredhurst, 1.00 - 6.00pm, Green Court Garden, The

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December 4th - BWAG, Christmas Carol Concert,  
7.30pm, St Peter's Church, & Green Court, The Street,  
Bredhurst ME7 3JY. Tickets - £7 pp, u16s free (07813  
785940 or email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com  
December 5th - Christmas Fayre, Holywell Primary  
School, Forge Lane, Upchurch 2.00 - 4.30pm.  
December 5th 7.30pm, & 6th 2.00pm - Worzel  
Gummidge Pantomime" A slice of cake and a cup of  
tea" The Centre, next to Travelodge, M2 Services,  
Tickets £7 adults £5 children, 01634 361117.  
December 6th - St Peter's Christmas Fayre, Bredhurst  
Village Hall 2.00 - 4.00pm. 50p, children free.  
December 6th - Union of Catholic Mothers, Carol  
Concert 7.45pm, St Augustine's Church, Parkwood,  
Tickets 01634 371897 or 01634 362896.  
December 6th - Christmas Wine and Wisdom St  
Matthew's Brewery Drive, Wigmore. 7.30pm Tickets  
£5 pp, Tables 6 to 8. Details 01634 370492.  
December 8th & 9th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa  
Sleigh Run, Hempstead, 6.00 - 8.15pm.  
December 10th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa Sleigh  
Run, Fairview, 6.00 - 8.15pm.  
December 11th & 12th - Gillingham Lions Club Santa  
Sleigh Run, Parkwood, 6.00 - 8.15pm.  
December 12th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History  
Society 'Village Signs & Their History' - Avis Harms,  
(see 14th Nov).  
December 13th - Carol Concert, Rainham Ladies with the  
UK Paper Band, Royal Dockyard Church, Chatham  
ME4 4TE, 7.30pm, Raffle and refreshments, in aid of  
the Millie Moo Foundation, Tickets £7 adults, £3 under  
12. 01634 370797 or 613715 or email  
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December 13th - 'Jingle Those Bells', Wigmore MADS  
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