

ACTION FORUM

AUGUST 2015
NUMBER 512

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



Rainham Station, probably in the 1950s, certainly before the extensive work associated with the electrification of the line in 1959. All that remains unchanged in this scene today are the footbridge across the line and the Rainham Community Centre building (centre right) which from the outside looks much the same. Major works are again updating the station area hopefully to improve life for the many who use its facilities each day. See page 9

lorna elizabeth

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AF Next Issue: September 3rd 2015
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Editorial

Congratulations to the Parks Department of Medway Council or whoever it is responsible for the colourful containers which adorn the railings in front of St Margaret's Church. Having just returned from a short break in Durham where we visited Crook Hall gardens the baskets remind me of the 'stained glass window' flower borders they have in the 'Cathedral Garden'. It certainly improves the appearance of Rainham High Street having a riot of colour brightening up the area, let's hope we are allowed to keep them this time, so far the containers seem to have avoided the attention of any late night revellers bent on destruction.

Thanks to Nicholas Kerr for his correction to our front page caption about St Mary's Church, Upchurch. Guilty as charged I am afraid to his suggestion that I used Wikipedia - don't we all take the easy option! He says:

'I was about to offer a minor criticism of your front page in July's Action Forum, for referring to the unusual steeple on S. Mary, Upchurch, tower, as a 'candle-snuffer' steeple. However, I discovered that Wikipedia was guilty of the self-same solecism, using almost identical words.

The substance of my criticism is the confusion (widespread) between a 'snuffer' and an 'extinguisher'. While the cone-shaped extinguisher can be found in practically every church in the kingdom, and in many other places where candles are habitually used, the snuffer has been consigned to the darkest depths of closets and cupboards or to museum displays. They were used before the days of self-snuffing candles, to remove the burnt part of the wick which hung down the side of the candle and caused it to burn unevenly. It consisted of a scissor-like pair of tongs, with flat blades at the 'business' end, which were used to grasp and remove the burnt wick. However, if used in a clumsy fashion, the flame on the candle could be extinguished, this being referred to as 'snuffing out' the candle. Far from extinguishing the candle, the snuffer's purpose was to enable the candle to burn longer and more effectively.'

I will try to remember in future but I am afraid 'candle snuffer' trips off the pen rather more fluently than 'candle extinguisher'.

If August copies July we can not really complain about the weather this summer. It has certainly been dry and warm - our garden is parched at the moment -

but a bit more sunshine would be good. We are still living off the excess water we had a couple of years ago but I am sure we will soon be hearing warnings of hose pipe bans and urged to conserve water supplies if it does not rain soon. Have a very good month enjoying the sunshine and we will see you again in September.

Correspondence

THANKING THE COUNCIL

I phoned 333333 to ask whom we should thank for the stunningly beautiful flower baskets in Rainham on the A2 opposite the Healthy Living Centre.

The person on the switchboard said we should simply ask for a compliment to be sent, so I sent one.

I wasn't quite sure how this works but other readers may like to know how to thank our Council.

Margaret Dunn

REUNION CHATHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Dear Editor,

The Annual Reunion Lunch organised by the Chatham Grammar Association is on Saturday 26th September, in the School Hall at CGSG in Rainham Road, Chatham. Pre-lunch drinks will be served in the Textiles room from 12.30 with lunch at 1.00pm. The School is open from 11.00am for those who would like to have a wander round and reminisce...

Our speaker this year is Jocelyn Buchan, an Old Girl who was due to speak to the Lunch last year but was called to unavoidable meetings in Strasbourg.

Tickets are now on sale at £25.50. Applications for tickets in writing, enclosing your cheque (payable to Chatham Grammar Association) and return address for tickets, to Treasurer, Chatham Grammar Association, 37 Homefield Drive, Gillingham ME8 8RS.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Draper -Treasurer CGA

SILVER SURFERS

Dear Editor,

Computers, laptops, Ipads, tablets and smart phones can be challenging to senior citizens. Rainham School for Girls will be offering free silver surfer sessions again for local people who would like some help and practice with new technology. The teachers will be the real experts, our students. There will be 4 sessions, all Wednesdays: 23rd September, 30th September, 7th October and 14th October; from 3.00 - 4.00pm.

Please telephone to book. Thank you.

Mrs K. Moon
 01634 362746

GARDEN OPEN - 25 Hanover Drive A huge thank you to all who supported the event at this lovely garden in June, also, and especially, to Joan and Fred and to everyone who worked so hard on the day. We raised a fabulous £1425 for Meningitis Now. The money has been donated in memory of my 15 month old granddaughter Willow. Thank you so much. Gill Flaxman, Creative Threads Sewing Group

RAINHAM METHODIST CHURCH

The members of Rainham Methodist Church would like to say "Thank you!" to everyone who came and shared in our Coffee Morning on the 20th June. It was great to hear and share your memories of the church. Our final services are on Sunday 23rd August at 6.30pm, with light refreshments served from 5pm, and a Communion Service on Sunday 30th August at 10.30am. You are most welcome to come and share with us. For further details contact Denise on 374231.

FUNKY BALLET and POP

St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham

We are hoping to start Parent and Child Classes on the first Monday in September for 2-4 year olds

Funky Ballet 9.30 - 10.00am

Funky pop 10.00 - 10.30am

If interested could you please email

mcentre.walsh@btconnect.com or contact the office on 01634 374038 for more details.

PROMS CONCERT

Gillingham Parish Church, affectionately known as The Church on the Green is hosting a Proms Concert on Saturday 12th September, starting at 7.00pm, when one of Kent's finest championship section brass bands, The Medway Band will be playing many well known, rousing pieces of music.

Tickets priced at £8 to include refreshments, are on sale now and can be obtained from 01634 932135. If you require further information please do call this number also. Free car parking Saxon Way School.

QUILT SHOW

Twydall Sewing Together

Saturday 26th September, 10.00am - 4.00pm

Twydall Primary School, Twydall Lane

Prize Draw 1st prize - Double Willow Pattern Quilt,

2nd - £50, 3rd - Hamper

Proceeds of raffle to SERV Kent and

Holding on Letting go Charities

Many items for sale (handy as stocking Fillers) as well

as a display of quilts the ladies have made.

BARN DANCE in aid of the Air Ambulance

Saturday 24th October

Mary would like friends who know her, and those who always support her Barn Dances, to contact her as soon as possible please on 01634 362415. She will reveal all when she hears from you! Donations in aid of The Air Ambulance will be very welcome. Looking forward to what is planned.

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GRAND AUTUMN BAZAAR

Sell your craft/bric-a-brac items at our Grand Autumn Bazaar in St Matthew's Community Hall on the morning of Saturday 24th October! The early Christmas shoppers will be out to bag a bargain! Tables are available to rent at only £7 each at this excellent location. For further details, or to rent a table please contact Linda Lisgarten, ring 01634 377267 or email: lindalisgarten@hotmail.co.uk.

CHRISTMAS GIFT and CRAFT FAYRE

in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and in association with PWCA.

Saturday 28th November, 10.00am - 2.00pm

Set up from 9.00am

Parkwood Community Centre, Long Catlis Road, Gillingham, ME8 9PN

Own table, £10 each in advance Further details from Paula 01634 373450 or Stacey 07897 007979

ART EXHIBITION John Austin is holding an exhibition of Pen Drawings at Rainham Library throughout August during normal opening hours.

DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors of Action Forum are needed for: **Rainham**

Tyler Drive, Thrale Way, Style Close & Craigie Walk **Wigmore**

Eleanor Close, Rutland Close and Top Maidstone Road **Parkwood**

Rycout, Howbury, & Hardinge & part Long Catlis Road Culpepper Road to Readscoft Road

Upchurch Drakes Close

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 2015

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: August 25th

August 2nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
Meet Roger Danks 07866 971819, Harrietsham Station
car park GR866529 5 mile moderate walk using field
paths and tracks, 21 stiles via North Downs Way,
Pilgrims Way & Ringlestone excellent views. No dogs

August 2nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim
lewislad@hotmail.com 07807 896995, 10.00am, Park
outside Sittingbourne Greyhound Race Track (Central
Park Stadium), Church Road, Eurolink, Sittingbourne
TQ921647 ME10 3SB 8 mile moderate walk via Saxon
Shoreway and Swale Heritage Trail. Bring picnic lunch

August 2nd - Volunteer Task Day, Capstone Farm
Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, come and help at the
Country Park, learn about the management and meet
new people, refreshments provided, 01634 338191

August 2nd - Friends of Bredhurst Cats Protection,
Summer Fete, Bredhurst Village Hall - Hurstwood
Road ME7 3JZ, 11.00am - 4.00pm, Parking on site
Refreshments, raffle, children's corner, bric-a-brac,
books, cat related items, tombola etc, 0797 3677390

August 3rd - Monday Hub, St Paul's Church, Parkwood,
ME8 9PN, 10.00am - 12.30pm all welcome.

August 3rd - Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens
Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, alt Mondays
2.00 - 4.30pm, new members welcome, 01634 230500

August 5th - Pond Dipping and Sweep Netting (5 - 12
years), Riverside Country Park, 9.30 - 11.30am or 1.00
- 3.00pm, Find out what lives in the pond and
wildflower meadows. £3 per child, 01634 337432

August 6th - Creative Clay Creatures (3 -12 years),
Riverside Country Park, 9.30 - 11.30am, it may get
messy, £3 per child 01634 337432

August 7th - 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.

August 7th - Games Afternoon, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Scrabble,
Rummy and many more card or board games, £1.50
for a cup of tea/coffee, biscuits and a warm welcome.

August 7th - HempstARA Whist Afternoon, 1.30 pm. the
Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead. Whist
players of all abilities are welcome, partner not
required, for details please call Eunice 01634 321664.

August 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group Stour
Valley Walk section 4 Meet Stephen Manning 07551
712438 Chilham Station CT4 8EG for a 9 mile
moderate walk finishing at Fordwich George & Dragon
King Street GR 179597 CT2 0DB No dogs

August 8th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium
Centre, 9.00am - 12.30pm Free entry, Stalls £5 from
carole@cdadswell.freemove.co.uk or 07779 366054

August 8th - Instep Dancing, social dances, Rainham
School for Girls, Derwent Way, ME8 0BX, Ballroom,
Latin, Sequence, 8.00 - 11.00pm enquiries 01634
363738 or email s.collins02@btinternet.com

August 9th - Volunteer Task Day, Riverside Country
Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, come and help at the Country
Park, learn about the management and meet new
people, refreshments provided, 01634 337432

August 9th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Len 01634
319391 lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk, 10.00am on the
Green in Offham TQ659574 ME19 5NR small car park
in the village or on road parking, 5.6 mile easy circular
walk on woodland and farm paths good views of North
Downs, Offham has the only Quintain still in use in
England. A Quintain, or tilting post, is a wooden post
used by knights practising for jousts. 3 stiles, dogs OK
short break in the middle, pub at the end with lunches.

August 9th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
Meet Gill Smith 07999 858981 Ickham park in the road
near Duke of William GR221581 CT3 1QP 5 mile
gentle walk along the Stour Valley, 16 stiles No dogs

August 10th - 23rd - Free Children's Entertainment,
Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre, 11.00am - 1.00pm
& 2.00 - 4.00pm daily, Children must be supervised at
all times. Free Admission, Free Parking
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August 10th - Monday Hub, (see 3rd Aug).

August 10th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group,
Millennium Centre, Rainham, meets 2nd Monday
evening of 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

August 10th - Medway Organ & Keyboard Club Concert,
Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30 -
10.00pm, Organist - Byron Jones, details ring Brian
Leonard 01634 234694

August 11th - Gillingham and District Fuchsia and
Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for
Girls, Derwent Way, 'The Plant Heritage Organisation'
- Jude Lawton, for details ring 01634 852519

August 11th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, St
George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 8.00pm, Postcards
of World War I - John Wigley, visitors welcome.
Details medwayantiquespublicity1@virginmedia.com

August 11th - Rainbow Whist Drive, Bredhurst Village
Hall Hurstwood Road, 7.30pm A partner is not needed
and all whist players are welcome, partner not needed.
Details 01634 610364

August 12th - UpARA Outing, Windsor - Day Trip, New
Members Welcome, For details email Chairman David
Powell davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

August 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Margaret 01795
843927 magloul@yahoo.co.uk 10.00am, Park and
meet in road near Tudor Rose pub car park (not in it),
near Sittingbourne TQ878639 ME9 8BT for a 12 mile
moderate walk to Lower Halstow via Newington and
Upchurch and join Saxon Shore Way before lunch.
Some hills. Wardwell Woods to Newington after lunch.
Bring picnic lunch for break and drink at Three Tuns

August 12th - U3A Rainham Mark Social Hall 56 London
Rd, 2.00pm, Anna Austin: How Women learned to
drive the car, ring 0789 589 0635 for details.

August 12th - Rainham Flower Club, Upchurch Village
Hall, 7.30pm, Workshop 'All Green' tutored by Avril
Hill, for details ring 01634 864572 or see
www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk

August 12th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall, Miss
J. Whittington - The Chelsea Pensioners, visitors
welcome, For details ring 01634 389966

August 13th - Donn Barcott's 'Five 5 Live', 44Two
Sports and Social Club, 8.30pm Featuring Elaine Dyan
and Andrew Hawkes Magician, Admission £6 all
welcome, Details 01634 405037

August 14th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting, Upchurch
Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2, New
Members Welcome davidrpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

August 15th Rainham South Councillors Surgery at
Parkwood Community Centre, 10.00am - 12 noon. No
appointment necessary

August 16th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
Meet Graham Starkey 01634 371948 Ulcombe All
Saints Church, Ulcombe Hill GR846498 ME17 1D For
a 5 mile undulating moderate walk through fields and
some lanes via Sutton Valence Castle No dogs

August 16th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Ade 01634
306405 adeballard@yahoo.co.uk, 10.00am at Charing
Station, Park in station car park or adjacent car park.
TQ950492 TN27 0AW for a 6.5 mile leisurely walk
through fields then gradual climb to the North Downs.
We pass the ruins of the Archbishops Palace dating
from 1348 and where Henry VII and Henry VIII both
stayed. Later on we see two brick kiln structures from
the 19th Century. Once common in the area they used
to burn locally quarried chalk, turning it into quicklime.
Bring picnic lunch. Pub at end with lunches available.

August 17th - Monday Hub, (see 3rd Aug).

August 17th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 3rd Aug).

August 17th - Wigmore WI, 'Summer Party' picnic in
garden, weather permitting, St. Matthew's Community
Centre, Drewery Drive, 7.30pm. Interested ring Sue
McGrath 01634 365369 or Mags Beard 01634 234000.

August 19th - HempstARA Hempstead Active Retirement
Association, Scout Hall, Dukes Meadow Drive,
2.00pm. Contact 01634 364440 for details.

August 19th - RainARA, 442 Club, Featherby Road,
Rainham, Talk on "Childhood memories of an evacuee
in Germany and Austria in WVE" by Mrs U. Atkins
Members only, Details kentsoftent@tiscali.co.uk or
01634 373596

August 19th - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Bredhurst
Village Hall, Ms Sue Shaw Illustrated Talk, 'The Road
to Chelsea' & Pelargonium Show, New Members
Welcome, Ring 01634 233554 for details

August 21st - HempstARA Whist Afternoon, (11th Aug).

August 21st - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland
Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Dave Lewis Quartet
featuring Dave Lewis on saxophones, Robin Aspland
piano, Rod Youngs drums and Neville Malcolm bass,
Admission £10, 01634 365352 or 07544 312743.

Continued on Page 11

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 we need to hear from you. All you need is a few
 hours each week and to be 18+. Please contact
 Membership Secretary, Hospital Radio Medway,
 01634 406865, studio@hospitalradiomedway.co.uk
 or www.hospitalradiomedway.co.uk.
 We look forward to hearing from you

TAI CHI

New beginners class started on Tuesdays in July at
 St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham.
 Free 'Taster Class' - Learn how to protect, maintain
 and improve your health with slow, flowing and
 gentle movement. Tai Chi helps improve breathing,
 posture, balance, circulation and flexibility, whilst
 helping to relieve stress, worry and anxiety.
 Suitable for people of all ages. For more information
 contact David or Maria (Registered Instructors) on
 01634 365069 Mobile or text: 07805 608003
 Email: mindsettaichi@aol.com

FREE CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT

Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre
 Monday 10th - Sunday 23rd August
 11.00am - 1.00pm & 2.00 - 4.00pm daily
 Treasure hunts, face painting, balloon modelling,
 plus arts and crafts workshops, suitable for all ages
 from toddlers to grandparents.
 Children must be supervised at all times.
 Events will be held inside the centre, outside
 Pandora and Thomson. Free Admission,
 Free Parking, see www.hempsteadvalley.com

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WALK: UNRESTORED AMHERST

Thursday 27th August, 6.30pm

Meet at Fort Amherst Café

Join Martin Rogers and the Brompton History
 Research Group on an evening walk around the
 unrestored areas of Fort Amherst, which are not
 normally open to the public (tour lasts approx. 2
 hours) Tickets £3 — pay on arrival

Booking essential, email bhrgbookings@gmail.com
 (Please note: Access may be an issue for some due
 to uneven ground and stairs)

DOLLS' HOUSE OPEN DAY & EXHIBITION

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St Margaret's Junior School Orchard Street,

Rainham, ME8 9AE

Saturday 29th August 10.00am — 4.00pm

& Sunday 30th August, 10.00am — 3.00pm

Last admission half an hour before closing

Many new items created for this 15th Exhibition

For further details contact 01634 312038

THE BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY CONCERT

Autumn Melodies

Kingfisher Singers

Saturday 12th September, 7.30pm - 10.30pm

St Margaret's Parish Church, Rainham

Ticket £7.50

Contact Olwen 01634 263622

GREEN ROCK RIVER BAND

Saturday 26th September, 7.00 for 7.30pm

Lower Halstow Memorial Hall

Come and enjoy an evening with the

'Green Rock River Band' which includes their

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR JULY

This month's Nature Notes are based on visits to Firle, a village at the foot of the South Downs near Lewes and Brook, a village overlooked by the North Downs near Wye. Both have an ancient parish church, a primary school and a public house, but are very different in character. Firle is an attractive and peaceful village on the edge of the parkland of Firle Place, the home of the 8th Viscount Gage. What becomes apparent as you walk around the village is that almost all of the buildings have dark green doors, gutters, drainpipes etc. These buildings include the Ram Inn, the village Post Office and Stores and the Forge and Carpenter's Shop. It is clearly an estate village. Lord Gage rules over the village with what he once described as "benevolent feudalism". He refuses to sell any of his cottages that become vacant. Instead, he offers them at discounted rents to people prepared to work in the village. Artisans have moved in, including a lady blacksmith, a baker and two carpenters. One result of this influx of young people is that the primary school is thriving. In my walk around the village I came across a number of house martins' nests under the eaves of the brick and flint cottages. The wet weather during the early part of the breeding season would have produced plenty of mud for the nests. I could both see and hear house sparrows in the yard of Place Farm. Swallows that doubtless had nests in some of the farm buildings were hawking for flies above the adjoining wheat fields. A family of goldfinches, emitting their characteristic tinkling notes, flew overhead. I came across honey and bumble bees and peacock and red admiral butterflies on the flowers in front gardens behind dark green garden gates.

Firle Beacon, like most of the hills that comprise the South Downs, has a smooth rounded contour and is bare of trees. There are spectacular views from the Beacon, looking northwards. In the middle and far distance is the High Weald of Sussex, including Ashdown Forest. The low lying ground in the foreground adjoins the River Ouse and the Cuckmere River and is largely pasture land on which beef and

dairy cattle graze. Sheep have roamed on Firle Beacon for hundreds of years and it is they that have kept the Beacon clear of trees and shrubs. They have also kept down the growth of down land flowers, although I did come across a few solitary examples of field scabious, greater knapweed and harebell. Near the top of the Beacon, through which passes the South Downs Way, I came across the remains of a dew pond, constructed for the collection of drinking water for cattle and sheep. Once back down in the village I enjoyed a raspberry ripple ice cream from the Post Office and Stores. I sat beside a Sir Gilbert Scott red telephone box which stood in open defiance of Firle estate's rules on the compulsory use of dark green paint and watched house martins flying to and from their nests. Brook near Wye, here in Kent, is a linear village, being mainly strung out along a single road. Its houses and bungalows are mostly modern and owner occupied. At its heart is a parish church which is Norman in origin and which contains some of the most remarkable wall paintings in Kent. Next door is a grade 1 listed, early 14th century, aisled, barn which houses a collection of old farming tools and machinery. The brook after which the villager is named flows into the Great Stour above Wye. I noted little of natural history interest in the village apart from meadow sweet, with its frothy white flowers, and harts tongue fern, both species growing alongside the brook. After visiting both the church and the barn, I headed for the Devil's Kneading Trough, which is a dry, deep sided valley formed by glacial action and is at the top of the Wye Downs. The steep climb to the public car park is lined with beech trees which were presumably planted in Victorian times. From the car park, at 550 feet above sea level, there are views over Romney Marsh, the Vale of Kent (through which runs the River Beult), Ashdown Forest and Battle Ridge above Hastings. The steep slopes of the Trough deterred me from climbing down it. The field at the top of the slopes was lush with vegetation. Dried up cowpats were evidence of the English White cattle, belonging to Wye Community Farm, that are grazed in the field once the flowers and grasses have dropped their seeds. Flowers in the field included harebells, ladies' bedstraw, greater knapweed, red clover,

marjoram and field scabious. The light brown seed heads of various types of grasses waved about in the breeze. Meadow brown, gatekeeper, chalk hill blue and common blue butterflies flitted about and bumble bees were attracted to purple thistle heads. At least two yellow hammers were uttering their familiar calls of high summer. The area around the Trough is part of the wooded Wye Downs National Nature Reserve and is a complete contrast to the sparse, sheep-grazed sward of Firle Beacon in the South Downs. Right next to where I had parked my car is the Devil's Kneading Trough Restaurant. Hidden discretely in the trees at the top of the downs, it is a welcome sight to both walkers along the North Downs Way and those, like me, who have not walked very far at all.

Joe Ennis

RAINHAM STATION

The 1950s saw many changes to the railway and Stations on the London to Dover main line. In early 1957, the platform surfaces at Rainham were extended at their western ends with concrete cast components, in readiness for the twelve vehicle formations proposed as part of the February 1956-approved Kent Coast Electrification Scheme. The third rail was installed throughout on the 'Chatham' main line during 1958, and in the same year, construction of a then new 'power box' commenced at Rainham. This was positioned on the 'down' side, immediately opposite its LC&DR predecessor. It appears that the building of the new signalling panel necessitated the decommissioning of the lengthy 'down' refuge siding - the site where this siding's connection with the 'down' line was made was now required for the signal box structure. Work also began on quadrupling 2¼ miles of route between Rainham and Newington, which would allow fast trains to overtake both stopping services and freights after the commencement of the full accelerated electric timetable. Rainham's 'power box' came into use on 26th April 1959, and semaphore signals were replaced with three-aspect colour lights. For the time being, goods traffic remained, and the level crossing was still manually worked. The full-accelerated electric timetable came into use on the 'Chatham' route on 15th June 1959; the ex-SER Weald of Kent main line continued to feature steam haulage until June 1962.

RAD

Extract from RAINHAM IN THE 1850s

(More will be included at a later date)

The construction of the railway and the station became the most important transport development during the decade. The station opened on January 25th 1858 and became known as 'Rainham & Newington' until it was renamed 'Rainham' in 1862. The station's two storey brick building incorporated the station master's accommodation. A wooden shelter stood on the south side of the station for waiting passengers and a foot track linked the two platforms with a goods shed connected by a single track at the Gillingham end. Because a signal box did not exist the points were operated by manual levers.

The railway brought immediate benefits to the village. Firstly, local farmers who had sold much of their produce locally or had it transported by slow moving barges to London were able to transport their produce to the capital much quicker by train. The railway also attracted more people to the area.

Rainham expanded rapidly with the coming of the railway and this led to an increase in its population to 3,905 by 1901. This doubling of the population and an expansion of businesses from 1850 to 1901 eventually made Rainham the largest village in the area.

David Wood

RAINHAM in the 1930s and 1940s.

(Part of a longer article by Richard J Church - more will be included at a later date.)

The Railway came to Rainham about 1858 before that Station Road was known as *White Horse Lane*. The original Southern Railway station, called *Rainham and Newington*, was a detached Victorian building, set well back from Station Road and the level crossing, it was reached by walking across a muddy field, and stepping over sleepers and a length of rail track - and if it was night time and pitch dark it could be very interesting!

To go to London, it was necessary to first travel to Gillingham, then change trains for London Bridge or Charing Cross, a time taking procedure.

In the late 1940s it was usual for us to get the train from Gillingham that arrived in London before 8am, thus qualifying for a "Workmans Ticket". If my memory is correct this return ticket cost 2/6d (Twelve and a half new pence) but a near essential London breakfast (tea and toast) in *Lyons Corner House* added to the cost.

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Diary 2015

August 23rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am

Meet Lindsay Floyd 07743 702049 St Margaret's at Cliffe car park off High Street (free with toilets) GR359447 For a 4 mile moderate walk Frontline Britain Trail, generally level but steep slope down to the Bay and steep slope and 100 steps up to the Dover Patrol Memorial Dogs on lead

August 23rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim lewislad@hotmail.com 07807 896995 9.00am, Park and meet in public car park on B2231 Leysdown Road/Shellness Road, just past Nutts Caravan Park (plenty of parking spaces). TR038703 ME12 4QT for a 10 mile moderate coastal route to Shellness Nature Reserve onto Harty Ferry and return via Leysdown Marshes. Bring binoculars, plenty of wildlife, coastal views, flying history and good pub stop, only one small stile, Bring Picnic lunch for midway break.

August 23rd - Final Evening Service Rainham Methodist Church, 6.30pm, light refreshment from 5.00pm, more details 01634 374231.

August 24th - Monday Hub, (see 3rd Aug).

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

August 25th - Rainbow Whist Drive, (see 11th Aug).

August 26th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. Questions and Answers Evening, 7.15pm start, £2 members, £3 non members includes refreshments. Contact 01634 852519 for further details.

August 27th - Walk: Unrestored Amherst, Join Martin Rogers and the Brompton History Research Group 6.30pm for an evening walk around the unrestored areas of Fort Amherst, which are not normally open to the public (tour lasts approx. 2 hours) meet Fort Amherst Café. Booking essential, please email bhrbookings@gmail.com Tickets £3 - pay on arrival. Note uneven ground and stairs

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August 27th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside, Rainham, Ring Sylvia Wildridge 01634 312038 for details.

August 29th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Tania 07841 913561 office@taniapeitzker.com, 10.00am, Park and meet at Court Farm Butchery & Country Larder, Upper Halling TQ692645 ME2 1HR lots of free parking in front of farm shop and/or in the adjoining field for a 5 mile leisurely walk past the chalk cliffs along Pilgrims Road down to the Blue Lake, past St Andrews Park to Halling Marsh, through Halling Village along the Medway River footpath with a visit to a church ruin, then up past Snodland Lakes, over to Holborough Lakes and through Paddlesworth Farm, including a visit/stop at the Lingham family chapel, St Benedict's Church. Then up the hill towards the North Downs forest, with stunning views over the farmland to the river. Back along public paths in the woods above Paddlesworth Farm to Ladds Lane and through Upper Halling Village returning to Court Farm's where refreshments are available as well as the BBQ followed by the Rochester Film Society event - if Ramblers wish to stay for the free party (films £5) BBQ and other food & drink charged at a low cost).

August 29th - Rainham Horticultural Society Show Day, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham 2.00 - 4.00pm, ring 01634 366276 for details.

August 29th & 30th - Dolls' House Open Day & Exhibition, 10.00am - 3.00pm, St Margaret's Junior School Orchard Street, Rainham, ME8 9AE details contact 01634 312038 www.rainhamdhg.co.uk

August 30th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Mike, 10.00am at the commuter car park just north of Bredhurst TQ799629 ME8 0LU for a 6 mile leisurely walk with a gradual incline via Bredhurst Hurst, Scragged Oak Road and Monkdown Wood then return to car park. Bring snack for midway break (Bell pub is currently closed, but Harrow nearby is open)

August 30th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am Meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 828249

Grangers Hill, South Hawke GR373541 CR3 7AD Turn right into Flower Lane just beyond the junction A22 / A25 for a 6 mile hard walk around the lovely village and countryside of Woldingham. One steep climb, no stiles, beautiful views. Dogs on lead

August 30th - Final Communion Service Rainham Methodist Church, 10.30am, details 01634 374231.

August 31st - Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, 2.00 - 4.30pm, new members welcome, details 01634 230500
September 1st - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, 'Living Card' making your own A5 card, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed For details contact Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

September 1st - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, 'Say it with Poison' - Russell Bowes, New members welcome, ring 01634 366276 for details.

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Diary 2015

September 2nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Arthur/
Jan arthur.waters@sky.com 01634 711734, 10.00am,
Park and meet in car park adjacent to 103 Albatross
Avenue, Strood TQ 711691 ME2 2XR for a 4 mile
leisurely walk via Broad Oak Wood, Great Wood,
Ranscombe Farm. Pub at end with lunches available.

September 3rd - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's
Community, 2.00pm, More anecdotes from Neil
Arnold, for over 50s ring 07434 672418 for details.

September 4th - 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 01634 364309

September 5th - Bredhurst Village Show, 2.30pm,
Bredhurst Village Hall, Ring 01634 233554 for details

September 5th - Instep Dancing, (see 8th Aug).

September 6th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Len
01634 319391 lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk, 10.00am,
Shipbourne Park, meet at Dene Park, Puttenden Road
large free car park TQ606510 TN11 9RJ for a 5 mile
leisurely Circular walk varied on woodland and field
paths some moderate climbs, 9 stiles, 4 gates. Weald
views as we pass Fairlawne House once owned by
Edward Cazalet who was for many years the trainer of
the Queen Mother's horses. The Chaser Inn in nearby
Shipbourne has lunches available.

September 8th - Friends of Medway Archives, 7.30pm
Frindsbury Parish Hall, Church Green, ME2 4HY talk
by Amy Adams, Learning & Communications
Engagement Officer will speak on the newly opened
Nation Huguenot Museum in Rochester. Tickets £5 (£3
to FOMA members) includes light refreshments.

September 8th - Gillingham and District Fuchsia and
Pelargonium Society, 'Roses and their Cultivation -
Peter Cox, (see 11th Aug).

September 8th - Rainbow Whist Drive, (see 11th Aug).

September 8th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, The
British Navy 1793 - 1815 - Alaric Bond, (11th Aug).

September 9th - U3A Rainham Mark Social Hall, Joe

Mendell: Bob Newhart Rides Again, (see 12th Aug).

September 9th - Bredhurst WI, Adele - Cupcakes, (see
12th Aug).

September 9th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, My Family and other
Setbacks: Mel Rees, for details contact Rhonda Peck
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September 9th - Rainham Flower Club, Demonstration
'A few of my favourite things' by Sue Thompson, (see
12th Aug).

September 10th - Wigmore Thursday Club, A visit from
Imam Safeer Zartasht (see 3rd Sept).

September 10th - Donn Barcott's 'Five 5 Live', (see 13th)

September 12th - Craft Market, St Margaret's
Millennium Centre, (see 8th Aug).

September 12th - Gillingham Parish Church, Proms
Concert 7.00pm, The Medway Band will be playing
many well known, rousing pieces of music. Tickets £8
includes refreshments, from 01634 932135. Free
parking Saxon Way School.

September 12th - The Brain Tumour Charity Concert, St
Margaret's Parish Church, Rainham, Autumn Melodies,
Kingfisher Singers, 7.30 - 10.30pm, Ticket £7.50
Contact Olwen 01634 263622

September 13th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Tony/
Ann 01634 406634 vajra.faulkner@btinternet.com,
10.00am, Yalding Meet at the Teapot Cafe/Museum .
Free parking on roadside by the canal or at the Lees
(Parking fee). TQ690497 ME18 6HG for a 6 mile
leisurely walk with hills, stiles and quiet roads. Good
views of the valley near Royden Hall. Bring picnic
lunch Pub at end: The Anchor Inn, 01622 814359.

September 14th - Rainham Evening Bereavement
Friendship Group, (see 10th Aug).

September 14th - Monday Hub, (see 3rd Aug).

September 14th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 3rd Aug).
September 14th - Reiki Kyokai Led by Robert Jefford,
8.00 - 10.00pm, Ramada Encore Chatham Historic
Dockyard, £12 pp, open to All, Booking Essential. For
details and book email kentreikishares@gmail.com

September 14th - Medway Organ & Keyboard Club
Concert, Organist - Trevor Flunder, (see 10th Aug).

September 15th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Leaf
Manipulation' Workshop Carol & Kaye (see 1st Sept).

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