

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

JANUARY /  
FEBRUARY 2015  
NUMBER 506



Rainham High Street as those who are mentioned in David Wood's article about the First World War in 1915 (see page 9) would have known it. Manchester House, the home of Sid Rash who died on the western front aged 24, is behind the shop blind at the extreme right hand side. The Chestnuts mentioned as the former home of Brigadier-General Godby (wounded in action) is further down the street towards Mierscourt Road and is now part of Longford Court. The Waterman's Arms Public House had by 1926 been converted to a private house for Vernon Watts the son of Robert Watts, a pharmacist, who owned the chemist shop next door (left). The gas lights would soon be replaced by modern electric street lighting and the cobbled pavement by smoother paving stones.

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**RECOMMENDED PHOTOGRAPHER AT PRESTIGIOUS LONDON & KENT VENUES**

Next Issue February 28th 2015  
Copy Date: Feb 17th Ads Feb 20th  
Editorial: Barbara Mackay Miller  
Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller  
Action Forum Office  
21 Station Rd, Rainham ME8 7RS  
(above Sunburst Books)  
Telephone: 01634 310011  
Email: af@thenet.uk.net

## Editorial

This is the time of year when we should be able to get our affairs in order. Short days mean gardening time is restricted and the longer gaps between editions of Action Forum allow no excuse for ignoring all the tidying up of computer files, sorting the accumulated paper mountain and preparing for the coming year. One job is to review our finances and I am happy to be able to tell you that Action Forum has again been able to donate to three charities. The money is saved by relying on volunteers to distribute to your homes instead of paying a commercial organisation. We are extremely grateful to these hundred or so willing helpers who trudge the streets each month bringing Action Forum to your front door. If you see someone in your road clutching a bundle and you appreciate their efforts please do have a few kindly words telling them so – it makes the job all the easier knowing you are valued. The volunteers should be proud of their efforts as since September 2000 when we resumed asking for help a gigantic £38,550 has been donated to charity. This month St Margaret's Church, Rainham, The Parish of South Gillingham and this year for the first time 'Tools with a Mission' have each received a cheque for £2000. If you have not come across the Tools charity their blurb states 'We collect unwanted tools together with sewing machines (manual or electric) and knitting machines. After refurbishment items go to Africa to help individuals start their own business and so support their family.' Obviously even though the items are donated considerable costs are involved from the collection and repair to transporting the items abroad. I am sure you will agree this is a good use of the money from Action Forum. If you have any unwanted tools our local collector is Mr Rod Butcher and he can be contacted on 01634 571647. Full of New Year Resolutions I actually managed to turn out one cupboard that had been festering for some considerable time! This naturally resulted in a visit to Courtney Road to get rid of the accumulated rubbish. Much of the junk was paper and cardboard and it was only when I finally found the right hopper that I realised the site must surely have been designed by men. At five foot four I do not think of myself as particularly short but it was all but impossible for me to heave the weightier bundles into the skip, it was way above my comfort zone. Fortunately a kind gentleman helped. Workmen are often stationed

beside the general waste hopper and they do help throw the heavy stuff away but would it be too much to ask to have a step in front of the other containers that loom up above us. Easter this year falls on the first weekend of April. This would normally be an Action Forum distribution date. In order to avoid any problems we are bringing the publication dates of both the March and April copies forward by one week to February 28th for March and March 28th for April. Please be aware if you are planning an event in the spring I will need copy earlier than usual. For the remainder of the year we revert to our normal first Saturday of the month publication date. Already the days are getting longer and with the mild weather a hint of spring is in the air so do have a very good month and we will be here again in March.

## Correspondence

### RAINHAM WAR MEMORIAL

Dear Editor,  
As an ex sailor myself, I was disappointed to read the letter from Mr Tim Stopford in last month's Action Forum and in particular his comments on the Rainham War Memorial.  
The number of local people, young and old, who attend the Memorial Service has increased year on year, this year was outstanding with a packed St Margaret's Church and an equally packed A2 outside. As to moving the Memorial, there is the issue of the Church Wall being possibly Grade 1 listed and the fact that there are graves immediately behind the wall and memorial itself which would prevent any move there. The memorial itself stands proudly in the centre of Rainham being viewed from both the A2 and Station Road, I cannot think of a more perfect place for it. I have attended the services over many years and cannot remember one instance of noise affecting the service, Medway Police are always in attendance and I cannot remember any instances with motorbikes. There have been a couple of occasions where ambulances have been allowed through but this is of course taken into account in the arrangements between the Church, Council and the police. The Church has also invested in a new speaker system to ensure that everyone in the large congregation can hear clearly.

With kind regards  
Councillor Mike O'Brien

### THE BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY

Dear Editor  
A very big thank you to everybody who attended and helped to make the September Songs Concert a very enjoyable evening. The event raised £600. £500 will be given to the Brain Tumour Charity and £100 to CWLTI a charity supporting children with life threatening illness. Next event a quiz on March 14th.

Thank you  
Olwen O'Dowd

### CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT

Medway Asthma Self-Help (MASH)  
Tickets £5, teams of up to eight  
Friday 23rd January, 7.00 for a 7.30pm start  
Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham ME8 9PN  
All drinks must be bought at the bar. You are welcome to bring snacks. Free parking.  
To reserve a space or for more information  
telephone 01634 855844  
or email medwayasthmahelp@btconnect.com

### ART EXHIBITION

John Austin is holding an art exhibition entitled 'Betwixt Land and Sea' featuring Watercolour and Crayon drawings at Rainham Library during February and at Walderslade Library in March during the normal opening hours. All pictures are for sale.

### TAI CHI CLASS

Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Committee  
Every Thursday, starting from February 5th we are considering holding a weekly  
Tai Chi class for any ability 2.00 - 3.00pm  
£5 per person per class  
Ring Kay 01795 844408 if you are interested

### LADIES PAMPER EVENING

Medway Asthma Self Help (MASH) is holding a Ladies Pamper Evening at Gillingham Golf Club on Friday 13th February from 6.00pm. Tickets are £3 in advance or £4 on the door. Come along and indulge in a range of pampering treatments including massage, reflexology and manicure from as little as £5 per treatment (payment direct to stall holders). To pre-book entry tickets or if you are interested in having a stall please contact us on medwayasthmahelp@btconnect.com or ring 01634 855844.

### SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS

Pantomime by Alan P Frayn  
Gillingham Dramatic Society  
Directed by Debbie Brennan  
February Half Term  
Thursday 19th – Saturday 21st February  
2.00pm & 7.00pm  
The Brook Theatre, Chatham  
Prices £9 concessions £7  
Family (4 Tickets) £30  
Box Office 01634 338338  
www.medwayticketslive.co.uk

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### CRAFT MARKET

St Margaret's Millennium Centre  
Saturday February 14th, 9.00am – 12.30pm  
Free entry to the public  
Stalls include: greetings cards, decorative items, jewellery, craft supplies, knitted goods, wooden goods, novelty items, framed pictures, local pictures/postcards, chutneys, crochet, baby blankets, bead weaving, pottery, instant tombola and bespoke personalised frames/messages, oil paintings, artisan chocolates, original artwork.  
Refreshment: tea/coffee, cake, biscuits and bacon rolls  
Stalls £5 for 6' x 2' 3" table, book in advance  
Email carole@cdadswell.freemove.co.uk or ring 07779 366054 for more information

### AFTERNOON CONCERT

Hempstead Village Fayre Group are organising an afternoon concert in Hempstead Village Hall on Friday, 20th February at 2.00pm. This will be our 4th annual concert and we are very pleased that "Harmony", a local group of singers will again be entertaining us. Tickets are priced at £4 each which includes tea & cake. Please contact Val Gorf for tickets or further details on 01634 230214, or email valeriegorf@blueyonder.co.uk

### CRAFT AND TABLE TOP MARKET

Saturday 28th February  
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall  
Beginning at 10.00am to 1.00pm  
Table at £6 each  
Please call Kay on 01795 844408 for bookings

### BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY QUIZ

Saturday 14th March, 7.30 - 10.00pm  
Twydall Church Hall, Gillingham ME8 6JU  
Ticket per person £5, Table 8 people  
Free wine and nibbles  
Free parking at Hall and Twydall Green  
Contact Olwen 01634 263622 for tickets

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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: 17th February

January 17th - Quiz Evening, Rainham Oasthouse,  
7.30pm, Admission £2.50 (£2 members) Rolls available  
60p each, for details ring Maggi 01634 610391.  
January 17th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United  
Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham,  
7.30 - 10.00pm, new and experienced dancers  
welcome, with or without a partner, for more  
information call 01634 366189 or 388546  
January 17th - 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  
January 18th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Simon and  
Mandy simonellwood@hotmail.com, 10.00am, Cuxton,  
White Hart Pub TQ713666 ME2 1AA for a 8.5 mile  
moderate walk very loosely based on the Cuxton  
Heritage Trail. Bring a picnic lunch for midway break.  
January 18th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847  
828249 Upper Upnor Public Car Park GR 756705 ME2  
4XG, 6 mile easy walk, dogs allowed.  
January 18th - Volunteer Task Day, Capstone Country  
Park, 10.00am refreshments provided, 01634 338191  
January 19th - Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens  
Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, alternate  
Mondays 2.00 - 4.30pm, new members welcome,  
details 01634 230500  
January 19th - Rainham Wives, Methodist Church Hall,  
Wakeley Road, Rainham 8.00pm, 'Sunflower' Beetle  
Drive, New members welcome, £2 per visit includes  
refreshments, for details ring Sue 01634 230639.  
January 20th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,  
Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30 - 9.45pm £3.50. A  
Message from Martha - Mark Avery, for Walks see  
www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.  
January 21st - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Bredhurst  
Village Hall, Illustrated, Talk - 'Pruning of garden Fruit  
Trees & Shrubs', Hyacinth Show, New Members  
Welcome, Ring 01634 233554 for details  
January 22nd - Hempstead Leisure Club, Games, whist,

tea and chat Village Hall behind Church 2.00 - 4.00pm.  
Details ring 01634 366907 new members welcome  
January 22nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Shipwrecked,  
Brian Biggs, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm,  
for over 50s, ring 01634 235507 for details.  
January 23rd - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group,  
Millennium Centre, Rainham, every Friday 9.45am -  
12noon to help people who have lost a loved one, join  
us for a cuppa and chat ring Julie 01634 364309  
January 23rd - Charity Quiz Night, Medway Asthma Self-  
Help £5, teams up to eight, 7.30pm, Parkwood  
Community Centre, All drinks from the bar, bring  
snacks. Free parking, for tickets ring 01634 855844  
or email medwayasthmaelfhelp@btconnect.com  
January 24th - Quiz Night for Macmillan Cancer Support,  
Millennium Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm sharp, £6 each,  
£40 table (8 per table) Call / text Liz on 07473 796824  
or email Wizrobesstom@virginmedia.com to book  
January 25th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, meet Roger Norman 01634 232404 07941  
965272 Shipbourne, The Common, Upper Green Road  
GR 594522 TN11 9PE, 5 mile moderate walk, no dogs  
toilets at start, flat walk, several easy styles. No dogs  
January 25th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Ray  
raycolinashby@hotmail.com 01634 315967, 10.00am,  
Bluebell Hill, Common Road near the Robin Hood PH  
TQ734627 ME5 9RJ for a 5 mile leisurely walk. Pub at  
end with lunches.  
January 25th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim  
jimbush46@btinternet.com, 10.00am, Hastingleigh  
Village Hall TR098449 TN25 5HP for a 10 mile  
leisurely walk Using the North Downs Way, good  
views all day, Bring picnic lunch. Pub at the end.  
January 25th - Volunteer Task Day, Riverside Country  
Park, 10.00am refreshments provided, ring 01634  
337432 for details.  
January 26th - Rainham Wives, Quiz and 'Bring & Buy'  
for our Charity, (see 19th Jan).

## WATERCOLOUR and CALLIGRAPHY Beginners and Improvers One Day Courses

Beginners: March 10th, May 5th, June 9th  
Improvers: May 6th, June 10th

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www.suninthewoodcraftdays.co.uk

January 27th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch  
Village Hall, 9.30am, Members £1.50, Guests £2, New  
Members Welcome, for details email Chairman David  
Powell davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk  
January 28th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,  
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Rochester Airport -  
James Preston, for details Rhonda Peck 07951 629444  
January 29th - Hempstead Leisure Club, 'The Weather'  
talk by Ian Currie, (see 22nd Jan).  
January 29th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Annual General  
Meeting, (see 22nd Jan).  
January 31st - Paediatric First Aid Course, 9.30am -  
4.00pm, £20 per person with free lunch or Money  
Management Course, Free 10.00am - 1.00pm, Parish of  
South Gillingham, St Matthew's Community Hall,  
Drevery Drive. Book: sarah@the139club.co.uk or  
07731 786 333 for either course.  
January 31st & February 7th - 2 Day Active Birth  
Workshop - Parish of South Gillingham, 9.30am -  
5.00pm £45 per couple. Free lunch. See above to book  
See www.the139club.co.uk for more details.  
January 31st - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 17th Jan).  
February - Art Exhibition at Rainham Library all month,  
Paintings by local artist John Austin, all are for sale.  
February 1st - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Graham  
07989 753278 graham.jenkinson@blueyonder.co.uk,  
10.00am, Aylesford in car park south of the railway,  
not the main car park. TQ728588 ME20 7QR for a 7  
mile moderate walk fairly flat (we Do Not climb Blue  
Bell Hill). Bring picnic lunch. Pub at end with lunches.  
February 1st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, Meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847  
828249, Capstone Country Park car park by fishing  
pond GR780652 ME7 3JG for a 6 mile moderate  
different walk, no stiles, Dogs allowed  
February 1st - Spirit of Bredhurst, each first Sunday of the  
month, service with guest Medium. 6.30 - 9.00pm, All  
welcome. Details 01634 361117 The Centre, M2  
Services, Next to Travelodge, Farthing Corner,  
Rainham www.thecentremindbodyspirit.co.uk  
February 2nd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 19th Jan).  
February 2nd - Reiki Kyokai Led by Robert Jefford, 8.00  
- 10.00pm, Ramada Encore Chatham Dockyard, £12 pp  
Booking Essential. kentreikishares@gmail.com  
February 2nd - Rainham Wives, '40s Reminiscences',  
talk by Shirley Goodweh, (see 19th Jan).  
February 3rd - every Tuesday 7.30 - 9.00pm and

Wednesday 10.00 - 11.30am healing is freely given,  
Reiki and energy healing by a dedicated team. (1st Feb)  
February 3rd - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm  
Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, 'Arts and  
Crafts Gardens' Steve Harmer, New members  
welcome, ring 01634 366276 for details.  
February 5th - Possible weekly Tai Chi class for any  
ability 2.00 - 3.00pm, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall,  
£5 pp per class, interested phone 01795 844408.  
February 5th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Games tea and  
chat (see 22nd Jan).  
February 6th - Games Afternoon, Lower Halstow's  
Memorial Hall 2.00 - 4.00pm, No Joining Fee - Just  
£1.50 for tea/coffee, biscuits and a very warm welcome.  
February 7th - Real life Self Defence, 1 day course, How  
to protect yourself in today's world (see 1st Feb)  
February 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, Meet John Williams 01622 764821 07977  
614033 Chilham car park off A252 at Taylors Hill  
GR066536 CT4 8BZ for a 5.5 mile moderate walk - the  
theme Jane Austen and Julius Laverius, Dogs allowed  
February 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Heather  
07887 750881, 10.00am, Faversham at the end of West  
Street near the Bull Inn TR 011614 ME13 7JL for a 4.6  
mile leisurely walk starting near Stonebridge Pond.  
Pub at end with lunches available.  
February 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim  
jimbush46@btinternet.com, 10.00am, Wye village car  
park TR052468 TN25 5EG for a 10 mile moderate  
walk. Excellent views. Bring a picnic, pub at the end.  
February 9th - 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  
February 9th - Medway Organ & Keyboard Club Concert,  
Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm, Organist -  
David Harrild, details Brian Leonard 01634 234694  
February 9th - Rainham Wives, Talk 'The Work of the  
Community Champion', Elaine Cutting, (see 19th Jan).  
February 10th - UpARA Outing, ITV Studios, London,  
New Members Welcome (see 27th Jan).  
February 10th - Gillingham and District Fuchsia and  
Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for  
Girls, Derwent Way, 'Growing Regal Pelargoniums' -  
Brian Carline, for details ring 01634 852519

Continued on Page 11

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**BERENGROVE PARK Funding & Development**  
Berengrove Park continues to provide a rich legacy for the community. Although cricket is the core activity, having been established in 1856, the ground and club house supports local residents in many other ways.

At its centre the development of grass roots cricket amongst youngsters remains very important to all our members and this is acknowledged by the authorities as a priority for the future development. In 2006, on its 150th anniversary, the club embarked upon an ambitious development project and now has all the criteria required in place for a new club house and extended car park. Planning permission has been granted and a secure long term lease negotiated with the landlords Medway Council. Close links are maintained with schools and businesses many of whom sponsor us and advertise when possible.

Our own Project Fund continues to support us but regrettably some of the money is required for essential maintenance of the pavilion (c1975) and changing rooms (c1950). Whenever possible work continues to improve the car park entrance and provide a new exit. As we continue to tread water financially we will apply in 2015 for help from Sport England (Lottery) whilst also lobbying the government for direct financial support via our local MP, the current Sports Minister and UK Sports – a Government Agency. We are also investigating fundraising opportunities by officially linking Rainham Cricket Club with Primary Schools and seeking support from the PE and Sport Premium Fund for Primary Schools.

2015 will be a critical year for the club hoping to gain sufficient funding to start work on the new Community Pavilion and car park.

K Chambers  
Trustee and Project Fund Coordinator

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Festival Secretary 01634 316677  
Closing date for entries January 31st 2015  
To enter visit the website, www.rnkmdf.org.uk, and download entry form and syllabus or email rnkmdfestival1@virginmedia.com  
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Saturday 21st February  
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall  
Doors open 7.00pm to start 7.30pm  
£5 per person with 6 to a table  
Evening includes a Ploughman's Supper.  
For Tickets please call Kay on 01795 844408  
(this is for catering arrangement's)

**CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT**  
Mayor of Medway  
Saturday 21st February, 7.30pm  
Millennium Centre, Rainham  
Tickets £7 to include nibbles  
(Please bring your own drinks)  
Available from Kate 01634 363023  
or the Mayor's PA 01634 332404

**CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT**  
The Medway Group of  
Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research  
Saturday 21st February, 7.30pm  
Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham  
Tickets £5 per person (Teams of 6) Licensed Bar  
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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR DECEMBER

Last December we visited Knole Park, which is on the edge of Sevenoaks and is owned by the National Trust. Knole is one of the few deer parks in the country to have survived, more or less unchanged, over the past 500 years. The park escaped the fashion of the 18th century, led by gardeners such as Lancelot "Capability" Brown, to create consciously picturesque landscapes. This was partly because the long established deer herd had made the park ornamental enough. The only concession to 18th century taste involved the planting of stands of beech trees and broad, tree-lined avenues of oaks and sweet chestnuts. There are two species of deer within the park, fallow (which have been there for centuries) and sika (from Japan and introduced in the 19th century). Although there is a considerable variety of colours among individual animals, the coats of both species generally turn a dark brown in winter. Until such time as they shed their antlers after rutting, fallow stags can be recognised by their flattened (or palmate antlers) and sikas stags by their spike - shaped antlers. Both of the two species at Knole feed mainly on grass and leaves but also, in the autumn, on berries and nuts such as horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, acorn and beech mast. When snow or ice covers the ground in winter, they may have to resort to eating the bark of small trees. In the spring, they may get into sweet chestnut coppices where they nibble off emerging shoots and leaves. One advantage of the winter is that it is easier to see, and admire, the different, characteristic structures of deciduous trees. I therefore took the opportunity of paying particular attention to the ancient oak, sweet chestnut, beech and sycamore trees in Knole Park. The oaks have broad crowns, considerable girths and massive, wide- spreading branches. Their bark is dark, cracked and rough. The lower branches of the sweet chestnuts spread out horizontally and then turn earthwards. The deep fissures of the barks of these trees spiral round exceptionally broad trunks. The graceful, pendulous lower branches of the parkland beeches spread out to a great distance before sweeping down almost to the ground. The trees have a smooth,

grey bark. The sycamores at Knole have shapely, spreading crowns and large, lower branches which run out almost horizontally for a considerable distance before sweeping upwards. They have a grey, flaky bark.

Knole has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, specifically for its unimproved, acidic grassland and for the invertebrates that live in the dead wood standing or lying in the parkland. Thousands of ant hills throughout the park are an indication that the grassland areas covered by the mounds have not been ploughed for centuries, if at all. All ants are social insects, living in colonies with one or more queens responsible for egg laying and the yellow meadow ant is the species that builds the ant hills found on undisturbed grassland. The ants feed largely on honey dew from aphids but will also eat vegetable matter and other insects. Green woodpeckers and jackdaws in turn dig into the ant hills at Knole and feed on the ants and their pupae. The woodpeckers can be most likely seen or heard in the dry valley (called The Gallops) that is crossed by the entrance road to the park. Ring necked parakeets can often be found in the trees overlooking The Gallops. The birds have bright green foliage and a long tail and they nest in holes originally excavated by woodpeckers.

There were still quite a number of species of fungi on show at Knole during December. Some were growing on rotten wood, some on living oak and beech trees and some on the ground under those trees. They included the chanterelle (yellow colour), elf cup (red gills), witches' butter (orange and jelly-like) and dead men's fingers (black). In due course we headed for the Brewhouse Tea Room via Echo Mount, one of the "stands" where fallow deer bucks and does congregate during the rutting season in the Autumn. The hill is dominated by a massive lime tree sporting several large clumps of mistletoe. Using evergreens such as ivy, holly and mistletoe to decorate houses in the winter is a custom that goes back to the mid-winter solstice. Evergreens were seen as symbols of the continuity of life through the dark season. At the entrance to the tea room we were intrigued to see, from the Christmas Lunch menu, that venison and chestnut casserole was on offer as an alternative to

roast turkey. We assumed that both ingredients of the casserole were products of the park land and thought that we would give the dish a try. However, we discovered that pre-booking was required for the Christmas menu, so we had to be content with the non-festive one. We were nevertheless content with what we had.

Joe Ennis

## RAINHAM AT WAR IN 1915

With the war just over five months old and uncertainty about how long it would last, 1915 saw the continuation of fund raising events and more war casualties.

Street lights were extinguished by general order on January 26th because of the threat of German air attacks and evening services at the church were restricted by the blackout. In the case of enemy aircraft attacks the ringing of the church bells were to signal their arrival, allowing special constables based at the fire station to warn residents not already indoors to take cover.

In February a Rainham volunteer platoon for the Chatham Volunteer Training Corps became established. A committee organised the training of recruits from Rainham, Upchurch, Hartlip, Lower Halstow and Newington. Later in March 34 men enrolled and drill took place at the Council School in Solomon Road. Sergeant-Major Richardson served as drill instructor with training every Wednesday evening. By the end of April a rifle range had become established in the High Street and Corporal Forster had taken over as the new drill instructor.

In May efforts were made to raise funds for an ambulance to transport wounded servicemen from the railway station to different hospitals. This became known as 'The Rainham Ambulance.' Mrs Tamplin the vicar's wife became committee secretary while Mrs Bodiam organised the collection of money around the parish to raise £45. By late June £50 had been raised.

The Empire Cinema in the High Street which predated the Rainham 'Bug Hutch,' showed regular films to keep residents entertained during the war with seats varying in price from 2d to 6d. Charlie Chaplin films like 'The Million Dollar Mystery' proved very popular although other silent films were also shown with a piano accompaniment and were well attended. Throughout 1915 Council School headmaster Harold

Greenhalgh organised the collection of eggs by pupils for the 'National Egg Collection for the Wounded.' In August 69 dozen eggs were collected and sent to the London headquarters. Over 1,000 eggs were collected between January and September. August ended with a concert organised by the Rainham Branch of Queen Mary's War Hospital Needlework Guild to raise funds for the war wounded.

War casualties included Sid Rash from Manchester House in the High Street who died aged 24 while fighting on the Western Front. On May 24th Percy Baker of the 2nd Grenadier Guards fell at Ypres after twice getting wounded and Brigadier-General Godby formerly of 'The Chestnuts' in Rainham High Street was wounded in action. In August Percy Champion aged 19 from Ivy Street of the East Surrey Regiment died of his wounds while Chief Petty Officer Andrew Evers aged 38 from Station Road drowned when 'HMS Natal' was sunk in the English Channel. Leading seaman Aaron Norris from Station Road serving on 'HMS Formidable' and Thomas Balcomb from Bredhurst Road of the Naval Reserve serving on 'HMS Hood' were reported missing after their ships were sunk.

When 'HMS Princess Irene' loaded with mines exploded on the River Medway on May 27th, 352 crewmen were killed and only one survived. Alfred Gulvin a bargeman from Henry Street was injured by flying debris from the explosion while at work on the river. Soot, small fragments and a case of butter landed in Rainham.

Finally, the year ended in disaster when a serious fire destroyed Kemp Brothers building in Station Road, caused £3,000 worth of damage and put thirty men out of work. Fortunately, nobody was injured but it contributed to more economic uncertainty and concerns about the future course of the war.

David Wood

## RNLI 60th ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The Branch would like to thank all those who supported us in October we raised an amazing £140. Our annual street collection raised £389.32 plus a further £73.45 collected at Gillingham Ice Bowl. Thank you to all for your generosity. If you are interested in Branch activities, please contact Diana Lawrence 01634 388635 or view our new Branch Website via the RNLI website/find my nearest

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## Diary 2015

February 10th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 8.00 pm, George IV - Connoisseur or Conman - Martin Heard, All visitors are made most welcome. Enquiries medwayantiquespublicity1@virginmedia.com  
February 11th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall, Mark Bathurst - Medway Queen, visitors welcome, For details ring 01634 389966  
February 11th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Flowers for Emma - John Pearce, (see 28th Jan).  
February 12th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Annual "subs" collection and table games, (see 22nd Jan).  
February 12th - Hempstead Leisure Club. "Leeds Castle" Talk by Dr. Ann Knife (see 22nd Jan).  
February 12th - 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  
February 13th - UpARA Monthly Meeting, (27th Jan).  
February 13th - Ladies Pamper Evening Medway Asthma Self Help, Gillingham Golf Club, 6.00pm. Tickets £3 in advance £4 on the door. From £5 per treatment (pay stall holders). Ring 01634 855844 for details.  
February 13th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History Society, Byron Road Primary School, Gillingham, 7.15pm. 'The Anglo Saxons' - Jeremy Clark Visitors welcome for a small charge details Ron Baker 01634 854982 or email r.baker1234@btinternet.com  
February 13th, 14th, 20th & 21st - A Christmas Carol, St Paul's Drama Group, GMC Community Hall, Third Avenue, Gillingham, 7.30pm, Sat 21st 3.00pm matinee, Adults £6 Concessions £5, 01634 852712  
February 14th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, 9.00am - 12.30pm Free entry, Stalls £5 from carole@cdadswell.freemove.co.uk or 07779 366054  
February 14th - Instep Dancing, Valentine Dance ticket only, (see 17th Jan).  
February 14th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 17th Jan).

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February 14th - Mayor of Medway Charity Concert, 7.30pm, St Margaret's Church, Rainham, Tickets £10 to include wine and nibbles available from Kate 01634 363023 or the Mayor's PA 01634 332404  
February 15th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Geoff geoff.rambler@me.com 07525 161766 10.00am  
Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way, TQ902522 ME17 2QT for a 6 mile leisurely walk including the Lenham Cross WW1 memorial. Pub at end.  
February 15th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, Meet David Brown 01634 373833, Faversham pay & Display car park off Leslie Smith Drive GR 014612 ME13 8PW, for a 6.25 mile easy/moderate circular walk. Generally flat, some hills, may be muddy if wet and a couple of stiles. No dogs  
February 16th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 19th Jan).  
February 17th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, The Jewel Hunter - Chris Goodie. (see 20th Jan).  
February 18th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Les Morgan Talk - 'Fuchsias', Hyacinth Show, (see 21st Jan).  
February 18th - The Wigmore Lectures, Wigmore Library, Fairview Avenue, Tickets £3.75, Booking 01634 337799, 8.00pm, Bertie Pearce: Charles Dickens - The Man, His Life, and His Characters  
February 19th - Rainham WI 1.45 - 4.00pm, Speaker on "Slugs and Snails", Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham. Visitors welcome for small entry charge per visit. Ring 01634 366276 for details.  
February 19th - Wigmore Thursday Club, An Australian Trip, Sharon Smith, (see 22nd Jan).  
February 19th - 21st - Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs, Gillingham Dramatic Society, 2.00pm & 7.00pm, The Brook Theatre, Chatham, £9 cons £7, Family of 4 £30, 01634 338338 or see www.medwayticketslive.co.uk  
February 20th - "Harmony", Afternoon Concert, Hempstead Village Hall, 2.00pm. Tickets £4 each includes tea & cake. Details and tickets 01634 230214, or email valeriegorf@blueyonder.co.uk  
February 21st - Quiz Night, Lower Halstow's Memorial Hall, start 7.30pm, £5 per person with 6 to a table includes a Ploughman's Supper. For Tickets please call Kay on 01795 844408

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## Diary 2015

February 21st - Charity Quiz Night, Mayor of Medway,  
7.30pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, Tickets £7 to  
include nibbles (Please bring your own drinks) from  
Kate 01634 363023 or the Mayor's PA 01634 332404  
February 21st - Charity Quiz Night, Medway Group  
Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research, 7.30pm, Parkwood  
Community Centre, Rainham, Tickets £5 per person  
(Teams of 6), Licensed Bar, Contact Dot 01634 864642  
February 21st - Quiz Evening, Rainham Oasthouse, (see  
17th Jan)  
February 22nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00,  
Meet Gill Smith 01622 710569 07999 858981,  
Chevening, St Botoph's Church for a 5 mile moderate  
hilly walk, one steep climb and stiles. No dogs  
February 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet John  
billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk 07749 760788, 10.00am  
Bluebell Hill Picnic Park in Common Road TQ743 622  
ME5 9RG for a 7 mile moderate circular walk, some  
hills. May be muddy in places. Bring picnic lunch. Pub  
midway. Pub at end with lunches available.  
February 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim  
jimbush46@btinternet.com, 10.00am, Challock Village  
Hall/Community Centre TN25 4AU for a 10 mile  
moderate walk. Picnic Boughton Lees. Pub at the end.  
February 23rd - Rainham Wives, 'Learning to Love  
Weeds' talk by Kathrine Lynn, (see 19th Jan).  
February 24th - UpARA Coffee Morning, (see 27th Jan)  
February 25th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,  
Pluckley: Most haunted village in England, (28th Jan).  
February 26th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service and  
talk by Fr Munna Mitra, (see 22nd Jan).  
February 27th - Medway Geographical Society, Byron  
Road School, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.00pm 'In My  
Liverpool Home' - George Wildridge, All welcome,  
contact 01634 362683.  
February 28th - Craft and Table Top Market, Lower  
Halstow's Memorial Hall, 10.00am - 1.00pm, Table £6  
each, Please call Kay on 01795 844408 to book  
February 28th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (17th Jan).  
March 1st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am  
Meet John Trebill 01634 244045 ASDA Kings Hill,  
park near recycling area GR677554 For a 6 mile easy  
fairly flat walk with some road walking. No dogs  
March 1st - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Graham  
graham.jenkinson@blueyonder.co.uk 07989 753278,  
10.00am, Lower Upnor public car park TQ763713 ME2  
4XB for a 10 mile moderate walk along the banks of  
the Medway. Pub at end with lunches available.  
March 2nd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 19th Jan).

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March 2nd - Rainham Wives, 'Cats, Their Needs and  
How They Communicate' talk by Petra, (see 19th Jan).  
March 3rd - Rainham Horticultural Society, 'A Year in  
the Life of a Lawn' Roland Stevens, (see 3rd Feb).  
March 4th - League of Friends, AGM, Seminar Room 2,  
Post Graduate Centre, Medway Maritime Hospital,  
7.30pm, all welcome, see a demonstration of equipment  
that the League has purchased for the Hospital.  
March 5th - Wigmore Thursday Club, A return visit from  
Mel Rees, (see 22nd Jan).  
March 6th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group,  
Millennium Centre, Rainham, meets every Friday  
9.45am - 12noon to help people who have lost a loved  
one, join us or ring Julie 01634 364309 for details.  
March 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Pete/Kate  
07751 879003, 10.00am Camer Country Park, parking  
free with toilets, near Sole Street TQ650669 DA13  
0XU for 5 mile leisurely walk. Pub at end with lunches  
March 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am  
Meet Brian Gevaux 01634 235883 Scotney Castle car  
park free. For a 5.5 mile moderate walk via Kildown,  
Lamberhurst and Scotney Castle, 3 stiles and gates with  
1 steep climb, fairly flat, some road walking. No dogs  
March 9th - Medway Organ & Keyboard Club Concert,  
Organist - Len Rawle, (see 9th Feb).  
March 9th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group,  
(see 9th Feb).  
March 9th - Rainham Wives, 'The Work of the Kent,  
Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance', talk by Sally, (see  
19th Jan).  
March 10th - Gillingham Fuchsia and Pelargonium  
Society, 'Fuchsia Growing' - Derek Dexter and  
cuttings for Mini Show in July, (see 10th Feb).  
March 10th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club,  
Ophthalmic Antiques - Tim Bowden, (see 10th Feb).  
March 13th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History Soc  
'Old Views of Medway' - Colin Coe (see 13th Feb).  
March 14th - Brain Tumour Charity Quiz, 7.30 -  
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