

# ACTION FORUM

March 2015  
NUMBER 507

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



Five ladies from the Rainham area travelled to India last November to assist at an orphanage and school teaching the children English and maths. From left to right across the back row are Natasha French, Sandra Colyer, Margaret Woolley, Marilyn Hodges and Sophia French (three are related Grandmother, mother and daughter). Enthused by the experience they are now fundraising to sponsor 2 young people to go to India and continue the work. See page 9 for more information and details of a Quiz Night on March 28th.

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AF

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## Editorial

Several people have responded to the queries that David Girling posed about Spekes Road in our December edition. The 'Brown Lady' had also been seen at the Star Lane end of Spekes Road so she must have quite an area to patrol. No explanation of who she is or why she appears has yet come to light. The second tale of a buried lorry has also been confirmed if only by hearsay but one plausible response was about a Farm with a small transport business which stood opposite the end of Fairview Avenue and could have been the site of this incident. Far more documented and remembered is the cave. In fact it seems that the area is riddled with them! Pictures exist of Notman's cave on land now occupied by The Hazels, Wigmore (see page 47 of The Third Book of Rainham). This extended for some distance. The link road now separates this part of Wigmore from Spekes Road and so would have destroyed any underground workings during the construction. A gentleman who was friends with a boy whose parents owned the house with the cave in the garden thinks it was probably a dene-hole as it was a deep hole with a cave going off from the bottom. A younger boy was persuaded to go down the cave with a candle and reported that it got smaller and smaller finally ending at a blank wall. Another reader emailed "Three deep holes existed in the wood below Hinton and Glenwood Close. To my knowledge possibly two still exist - definitely **one** does and is surrounded by very rickety fencing. One of the three was filled with cut down trees when Glenwood Close was being built. A heavy machine fell into it and the driver dropped beneath and almost died because of the fumes from the engine". Thank you everyone who responded. Last month Joe Ennis visited Knole Park in his Nature Notes. We have been asked to make it clear that only the house is owned by The National Trust. The park remains in the ownership of the Sackville family who kindly allow access to the public. In the past some areas of the parkland away from the house were ploughed by tenant farmers. Spring is really in the air, the sun is shining and the sky is blue, still chilly but it is very tempting to abandon all jobs inside and go out for a walk around the orchards. We include plenty in our pages to occupy your time this month from Art Exhibitions to

Concerts, Craft Markets and Quiz Nights, not to mention of course the walks organised by our rambler groups so please do read on and also get out to enjoy the spring weather whenever possible. We will see you again in April - a week earlier than usual to avoid the Easter weekend.

## Correspondence

### PASSION PLAY - EASTER 2015

Dear Editor,

The Parish of South Gillingham is promoting a Passion Play to be performed on Parkwood Green, Deanwood Drive, on Good Friday 3rd April. The Play has been written by Geoff Hufton, will be directed by Geoff Down and performed by 50 actors all from the locality of Rainham. Members of the Territorial Army are also involved and will form the Roman Legion as well as assist with scenery handling! The major role of Jesus will be taken by Chris Garwood a professional actor, also from Rainham, who trained at the Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance. His most recent role has been as John in Openscript's production of Oleana by David Mamet in Aylesbury and Chris is currently creating and producing plays for Kent schools through his own Boffo Theatre. The Play covers the period between Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and culminates with His crucifixion. The dialogue will give some background as well as providing a dramatic representation of the events that took place.

This ambitious community project is hoped to draw an audience of up to 2000, easily accommodated at Parkwood Green.

Entry is free and the Play commences at 2.00pm and will last for about 75 minutes. The site will be open from 1.30pm when the audience can meet and mingle with the actors. Information will be provided about the staging of the Performance (which will be 'in the round') with details of South Gillingham Churches' services where the story will continue to be told on Easter morning.

We hope that your readers will join us for this event which we believe is the first of its type in Kent. Further information can be obtained from Claire Schofield the Play Administrator 01634 230423 or email passionplay15@outlook.com

Kind regards, Paul Warren  
Passion Play Promoter

### MONDAY HUB

Dear Editor

We are writing to invite readers of Action Forum to The Monday Hub which meets at St Paul's Church in Parkwood, on Mondays 2, 16, 30 March and 13, 27 April (dates for the rest of the year will be in the Diary). The Hub, now in its fifth year, is open from 10.00am - 12.30pm with light refreshments, (tea, coffee and hot chocolate - all free), lively conversations about books we've read, the day's news, what we've been doing, etc. There's an ongoing jigsaw, card and board games

such as UNO, Rummikub, Scrabble and more. For the more active we have table tennis, boccia and curling. Some people drop in for a coffee and to read the paper or to contribute food items for the Medway Food Bank. We think it's a good way to start the week. Come and meet us - if you are at home due to ill health or retirement, when you've dropped children or at school, before you go shopping in Parkwood or visit the Health Centre. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to speak to somebody before your first visit to the Monday Hub, please phone Jill on 01634 230780. Come for a cuppa and make friends!

Yours sincerely  
The Monday Hub Planning Team

### ST MATTHEWS 50th ANNIVERSARY

Dear Editor,

May I take this opportunity to remind those who will be joining us on Easter Sunday, 5th April, for the 50th Anniversary of St. Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, that the Service of Holy Communion will be at 10am the celebrant being The Bishop of Rochester. This will be followed by refreshments in the Community Centre. If anyone has any photographs or mementos of our early years to show, we would be pleased to have them beforehand so that they can be mounted on our notice boards. A suitable receptacle will be placed in the Church from Sunday, 29th March (Palm Sunday).

Yours sincerely  
Ninon and John Tice  
01634 360633 email: ninandjon@btinternet.com

### RAINHAM at WAR 1915

Dear Editor

How good to see my grandfathers mentioned in the article 'Rainham at War 1915' by David Wood. Alfred Gulvin was master of the barge 'Messenger' which had unloaded mines into the 'Princess Irene' and just cast off when the ship blew up. The barge was damaged and sank. Grandad and the mate managed to get into the barge boat and row home to Otterham Creek. My father was 6 years old and ran indoors shouting to Grandma that his dad was coming along the road with his head bandaged and bleeding. History repeated itself when my father, Arthur, also survived being blown up during the 2nd World War while Captain of a fleet Minesweeper in the Mediterranean.

Yours sincerely  
Roger Gulvin

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### RAINHAM at WAR in 1915

Dear Editor

With Reference to David Wood's Article, HMS Natal was indeed lost in 1915 but not in the English Channel and not as a result of enemy action. She sank at her anchorage in the Cromarty Firth following a series of internal explosions on 30th December 1915. The enquiry attributed the cause of the explosions and loss of the ship to unstable ammunition in the after magazines. Some women and children were aboard at the invitation of the captain watching a film show when the explosions took place and sadly lost their lives along with a great many of the ship's company. HMS Hood was positioned across the southern entrance to Portland Harbour and scuttled to deny access to enemy submarines. Although the scuttling, on 4th November 1914, did not go entirely to plan there is no record of any resulting injury or loss of life and the wreck is to this day I believe popular with recreational divers.

Best Regards,  
Paul Dunn.  
Email spdfodwin@aol.com

### DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors are needed for:

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Tufton Road  
Pump Lane (Ashley Road to Railway)  
**Hempstead**  
Wildwood, Black Rock, Stalham, Coppice Court  
**Upchurch**  
The Poles, Church Farm Road, Forge Lane, part of The Street

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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Carol, she could have been family!

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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 March

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 - 31st - Exhibition of Paintings by Local  
Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman on  
show and for sale in Rainham Library  
March 2nd - Monday Hub, St Paul's Church, Parkwood,  
ME8 9PN, 10.00am - 12.30pm all welcome.  
March 2nd - Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens  
Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, alt Mondays  
2.00 - 4.30pm, new members welcome, 01634 230500  
March 2nd - Rainham Wives, Methodist Church Hall,  
Wakeley Road, Rainham 8.00pm, 'Cats, Their Needs  
and How They Communicate' talk by Petra, New  
members welcome, £2 per visit includes refreshments,  
for details ring Sue 01634 230639.  
March 3rd - Every Tuesday 10.00am - 2.00pm Task Day,  
Capstone Farm Country Park, 01634 338191  
March 3rd - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed  
Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm  
'Helter-skelter' - a daffodil spiral, New members  
welcome, first visit free, no experience needed, details  
Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or kayebuss@btinternet.com  
March 3rd - Every Tuesday 7.30 - 9.00pm and Wed  
10.00 - 11.30am healing is freely given, Details 01634  
361117 The Centre, M2 Services, Farthing Corner,  
Rainham www.thecentre-mindbodyspirit.co.uk  
March 3rd - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm  
Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, 'A Year in  
the Life of a Lawn' Roland Stevens, New members  
welcome, ring 01634 366276 for details.  
March 4th - Every Wednesday 10.00am - 3.00pm  
Volunteers Task Day, Ranscombe Farm Nature  
Reserve, Cuxton 01634 292062

March 4th - League of Friends, AGM, Seminar Room 2,  
Post Graduate Centre, Medway Maritime Hospital,  
7.30pm, all welcome, see equipment League purchased  
March 5th - Every Thursday 10.00am - 2.00pm  
Volunteers Task Day, Darland Bank Nature Reserve,  
Gillingham 01622 662012  
March 5th - Wigmore Thursday Club, A return visit from  
Mel Rees, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm,  
for over 50s, ring 01634 235507 for details.  
March 5th - Hempstead Leisure Club. Make and Bake  
event. Hempstead Village Hall behind the Church 2.00  
- 4.00pm. 01634 366907, New members welcome.  
March 5th - Tai Chi Demonstration, 2.00pm, Lower  
Halstow Memorial Hall, Free demonstration and talk by  
David Landers and his wife Maria, ring 01795 844408  
March 6th - 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  
March 6th - Lower Halstow Games Afternoon, 2.00 -  
4.00pm, Memorial Hall, No joining fee, just £1.50 pp  
includes drink and biscuits and a very warm welcome.  
March 7th - RAMASES Newton Village Hall,  
2.30pm, The Peggy Dewey Memorial Lecture by John  
Dewey 'A Fish not called Wanda' £7, Guests £9,  
Tickets at the door, email ramasesnk@hotmail.com or  
ring 01795 472316  
March 7th - Quiz Night, Holy Trinity Church, Twydall,  
7.00pm, £5 per person, Bring your own nibbles and  
drinks, details Ann 01634 377671  
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 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. 5.5 mile moderate walk, 1 steep climb,  
fairly flat, some road walking. No dogs

## WATERCOLOUR and CALLIGRAPHY

Beginners and Improvers One Day Courses

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

Improvers: May 6th, June 10th

Phone Jacky for details 01622 861983

www.suninthewoodcraftdays.co.uk

March 9th - Medway Organ & Keyboard Club Concert,  
Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30 -  
10.00pm, Organist - Len Rawle, details ring Brian  
Leonard 01634 234694  
March 9th - Reiki Kyokai Led by Robert Jefford, 8.00 -  
10.00pm, Ramada Encore Chatham Historic Dockyard,  
£12 per person, open to All, Booking Essential. For  
details and book email kentreikishares@gmail.com  
March 9th - 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  
March 9th - Rainham Wives, 'The Work of the Kent,  
Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance', by Sally, (2nd Mar).  
March 10th - Rainbow Whist Drive, Bredhurst Village  
Hall Hurstwood Road, 7.30pm A partner is not needed  
and all whist players are welcome, 01634 610364  
March 10th - Gillingham and District Fuchsia and  
Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for  
Girls, Derwent Way, 'Fuchsia Growing' - Derek  
Dexter and cuttings for Mini Show in July, for details  
ring 01634 852519  
March 10th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, St  
George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 8.00pm,  
Ophthalmic Antiques - Tim Bowden, visitors welcome.  
medwayantiquespublicity1@virginmedia.com  
March 11th - Rainham Flower Club, Upchurch Village  
Hall, 7.30pm, Demonstration 'Wooden it be lovely' by  
Robin White, for details ring 01634 864572 or see  
www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk  
March 11th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall, John  
Weir - Funeral Director, visitors welcome, For details  
ring 01634 389966  
March 11th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,  
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Fund Raising, for  
details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444  
March 12th - Hempstead Leisure Club, New Age  
Curling, Bocchia, Board games etc. (see 5th March)  
March 12th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Birthday Tea  
with entertainment by Harmony, (see 5th Mar).  
March 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21st - Death by Fatal Murder by  
Peter Gordon, Rainham Theatrical Society, Curtain up  
8.00pm, Box Office 0844 8793224 or on-line at  
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk  
March 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  
March 13th - UPARA Monthly Meeting, Upchurch  
Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2, New  
members welcome davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk  
March 13th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History  
Society www.grlhs.weebly.com Byron Road Primary  
School, Byron Road, Gillingham, 7.15pm. 'Old Views  
of Medway' - Colin Coe Visitors welcome for a small  
charge details Ron Baker 01634 854982 or email  
r.baker1234@btinternet.com  
March 14th - NSPCC Quiz Evening, Thamesview  
Primary School, Rainham, 7.30pm, Tables of up to 8,  
Tickets £7.50 (includes Ploughman Supper). Bring own  
drinks and glasses, ring 01634 231003 or 01634 865286  
March 14th - Brain Tumour Charity Quiz, 7.30 -  
10.00pm, Twydall Church Hall, ME8 6JU, Ticket £5,  
Table 8 people, Free wine and nibbles, 01634 263622  
March 14th - Old Barn Orchestra Concert, 7.30pm, St  
Matthew's Community Hall, Drewery Drive, Wigmore  
ME8 0NY Tickets from 01634 376979 or 01795  
843228 or oldbarnos@googlemail.com £10 in advance  
and £12 on the door, under 16s £1, in aid of Demelza  
Children's Hospice.  
March 14th - 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  
March 15th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am  
Meet Anne Bond and Pat Wells 07778 902866 07804  
837155 East Malling Village Field car park off High  
Street near railway bridge GR703569 ME19 6AJ. For a  
5 mile moderate mostly flat walk through orchards and  
woodland, could be muddy. Dogs allowed  
March 15th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Jim  
jimbush46@btinternet.com, 9.30am Barham main road  
by the football pitch TR207499 TN CT4 6NX for a 13  
mile moderate walk quite hilly, excellent views along  
the Elham valley. Bring a picnic, lunch stop in Elham.  
March 15th - Dog First Aid 10.00am - 1.00pm A unique  
UK course complies fully with Veterinary Surgeons  
Act 1966 www.dog-first-aid.com details 01634 361117  
The Centre, www.thecentre-mindbodyspirit.co.uk  
March 15th - Volunteer Task Day, Capstone Farm  
Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, meet new people,  
Ring 01634 338191 for details.

Continued on Page 11

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**RAINBOW WHIST New Group**  
Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood Road  
Tuesdays 10th & 24th March, 7.30pm and then  
every other Tuesday throughout the year. A partner  
is not needed and all whist players are welcome  
Contact Julia Wales 01634 610364 for more details.

**DEATH BY FATAL MURDER** by Peter Gordon  
A hilarious murder/mystery spoof  
Rainham Theatrical Society  
March 12.13.14.19.20.21 Curtain up at 8.00pm  
The infamous Defective Inspector Pratt is once again  
at large at Bagshot House' where mayhem ensues.  
This Agatha Christie spoof has all the ingredients of  
a Murder Mystery, a comedy thriller, filled with  
characters that put Pratt's detective work to the test.  
**UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL** with Keith Jack  
Sunday 29th March, Curtain up 7.00pm  
Box Office on 0844 8793224 or on-line at  
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

**LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
Gillingham & Rainham www.grlhs.weebly.com  
Byron Road Primary School, Gillingham  
Friday 13th March, 7.15pm.  
'Old Views of Medway' - Colin Coe  
Visitors welcome for a small charge.  
For further information contact Ron Baker  
01634 854982 or email r.baker1234@btinternet.com

**OLD BARN ORCHESTRA**  
Saturday 14th March, 7.30pm  
St Matthew's Community Hall, Drewery Drive,  
Beethoven's Symphony No 8, Prokofiev's Classical  
Symphony, Mozart's Overture Idomeneo, Hummel's  
Trumpet Concerto: Soloist Keven Ashman  
Conductor: Bryan Gipps Leader: Wendy Cochran  
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**NSPCC QUIZ EVENING**  
Saturday 14th March, 7.30pm  
Thamesview Primary School, Bloors Lane, Rainham  
Tickets £7.50 (includes Ploughman Supper).  
Tables of up to 8  
Bring own drinks and glasses  
Telephone 01634 231003 or 01634 865286

**THE WIGMORE LECTURES**  
Wigmore Library, Fairview Avenue  
Tickets £3.75, Booking 01634 337799  
Wednesday 18th March, 8.00pm  
Hattie Ellis - Spoonfuls of Honey  
Honey is a magical food and bees help keep the  
planet alive. Foodwriter Hattie Ellis dips into her  
collection of 100 pots from around the world to tell  
the story of honey and the honeybee.

**REFLECTIONS**  
St. Mary's Church Choir & Upchurch Choral Soc  
Music and Readings for Eastertide  
Good Friday 3rd April, 7.00pm  
St. Mary's Church, Upchurch  
Admission free.  
Donations to the Wisdom Hospice.

**MACMILLAN CRAFT FAIR**  
Saturday 16th May  
A Craft Fair is being held on 16th May 2015 from  
10.00am - 12.30pm, on the ground floor of the  
Millennium Centre, Rainham. Tables are £10 each  
with all proceeds to Macmillan Cancer Support.  
Please call Jean Mardel on 01634 388111 or Jean  
Higgins on 01634 233930 to book a table.

**EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS**  
by Local Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson  
& Ron Wiseman will be on show & For Sale  
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**Entwined Wedding Fayre**  
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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY

For family reasons, my wife and I visit Brighton fairly regularly. John Betjeman was quite fond of the place. "The best looking seaside town in Britain", he once wrote. However, for me, the main attraction of the city is its elm trees and, in winter, its roost of starlings, rather than its architecture. It is estimated that 25 million elm trees were lost, in the 1970s and early 1980s, to Dutch elm disease. Fortunately, some 17,000 elms remain in the streets and parks of Brighton and Hove. Many were planted in Victorian and Edwardian times by the municipality and Huntingdon elms are the commonest trees growing in the streets. Fortuitously, this tree is one of the species that is most resistant to Dutch elm disease. Brighton and Hove's elm trees have survived the disease, which is carried by a beetle from tree to tree, in part because the City is bounded by the sea to the south and the largely treeless South Downs to the north and partly because of the Council's policy of felling and disposing of infected trees as quickly as possible.

On our journeys to Brighton, we have our first sight of the long line of the hump-backed South Downs soon after reaching the end of the M23. In due course, the London to Brighton Road (the A23) climbs onto the Downs through the gap between Wolstonbury Hill and Newtimber Hill. The former, covered in short, chalk grassland, rises steeply and dramatically above the Sussex Weald. A hanger of trees cling to the equally precipitous northern slope of Newtimber Hill. Once past Pyecombe, the A23 continues down a long, dry valley that leads to the sea. It passes through rolling, down land fields of wheat, sheep and beef cattle, until it reaches the edge of the built-up city at the one-time village of Patcham. Very soon the road skirts Preston Park, in which can be found the Preston Park Twins, two magnificent English elm trees. The farming landscape was once full of these heavy, fulsome, towering trees, which have been immortalised in paintings by both Constable and Turner. The Twins are as much as 400 years in age. They are the oldest elms in this country and perhaps in Europe. They are massive in girth and hollow, their

cavities are blackened by a harmless fungus. The eggs of the white letter hairstreak butterfly are laid on the leaves of the Twins. In July, newly hatched butterflies can usually be seen, as silver specks, tumbling in the sunshine and circling around the tops of the trees. Following an afternoon tea, family members and I walked to Brighton Pier, arriving at 4pm, in order to witness the appearance of flocks of starlings. The sun was low in the sky, behind a small area of cloud, leaving a yellow glow above the sea. The West Pier, on which starlings used to roost before it was reduced to a blackened, iron skeleton, stood out in silhouette in the distance. We did not have long to wait before groups of starlings began to arrive from all landward directions. They would merge into larger flocks, which would then twist and turn in perfect unison. After a while, some birds broke away from the flocks and swooped under the pier in order to roost on the supporting iron framework. Birds were still arriving at the pier as a red sun disappeared below the horizon at 5.15pm, but the large aerial displays had almost come to an end. The Brighton starlings have flown from parks, playing fields and pastures as far as 20 miles away, where they had fed on worms and grubs of larvae such as leather jackets. Resident starlings have been outnumbered by flocks of birds from northern and eastern Europe that over-winter here. The airborne displays over, we walked up one side of the pier and down the other. We could hear, through the gaps in the planks of the walkways and even above the loud music of the amusements on the pier, what must have been thousands and thousands of starlings chattering to each other. Television pictures from Aberystwyth Pier, transmitted during a BBC TV Autumn Watch programme of a few years ago, showed starlings jostling for the best positions under the Welsh pier. The birds took some time to settle down but became vocal and restive again towards dawn. They were clearly adhering to the old adage that it is the early bird that catches the worm because, once there was enough light to enable them to see their way out of the roosting site, the television pictures showed that they began to leave. They did so in the manner in which they arrived, that is, in waves which flew in different directions.

Joe Ennis

## WIGMORE MADS' CONDUCTOR

The Wigmore MADS (Music & Drama Society) are looking for a new musical director / conductor. MADS meet every Thursday at St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore and perform at the same venue usually three times a year. The choir currently has approximately 40 members (ladies and gents) with mixed abilities, who enjoy singing in unison, two, three and four part harmony. The ability to read music and a basic knowledge of music theory are essential together with some experience of singing in a choir of any sort. However, previous experience of leading a choir is not essential as long as you are confident with a sense of humour and plenty of enthusiasm. Please call Jackie on 01634 379740 for further information.

## SHEILA RUSTED 1931 – 2014

Sadly we learnt of the death of Sheila Rusted at the end of December. Many will remember Sheila for her lifetime of service at Twydall Junior School and also as Captain of 1st Rainham Guide Company for over thirty years from the 1950s. Sheila was born in Sittingbourne but her father was killed in an accident before she was two and in 1939 she and her mother moved to Sheerness to be closer to her maternal family. In 1940 together with her school friends she was evacuated to Wales for the next three years. After an initial first night in Wales which did not go well Sheila was billeted with Mr & Mrs Smith. Mr Smith was the schools headmaster and this happy time resulted in a life long relationship with 'Uncle and Auntie' and was her inspiration to become a teacher.

On moving to Rainham Sheila took a position at Twydall School becoming head of English and Maths at various times, taking extra qualifications to excel at these tasks. During this time Guiding was another long term love and she diligently helped several generations of girls as Captain of 1st Rainham Company and also as a Commissioner. Even in retirement Sheila continued to study particularly teaching herself Latin and also continued to help at the school until her health prevented this. With help from very good friends and neighbours she was able to stay in her home for as long as possible and continued to receive support from friends at St Augustine's Church, Gillingham which she had

regularly attended for many years. It was here that her funeral, for which she had prepared the service, was held in January.

## VOLUNTARY WORK WITH CHILDREN IN INDIA

Five local women went to India last November working in a school and orphanage. We felt privileged to work with poor children helping them to learn English and Maths. If they can speak English they have a much better chance in life.

The school was in a rural area, the families, uneducated farmers and labourers are below the poverty line. Life is basic, there is no running water, the children are encouraged to attend school by the government with a free lunch. At the government funded orphanage for boys aged between 6 and 18, the government funds them for 9.5 months of the year but they rely on voluntary contributions to make up the difference.

We found the children were very happy to see us and we enjoyed working with them, they were very keen to learn and our time with them went very quickly. We are trying to raise funds to sponsor 2 young people go and continue the work.

We are consequently holding several fund raising events, the first being a Quiz Night on Saturday 28th March at St Margaret's Junior School, starting at 7.00pm, supper is provided, the tables of 8 cost £7 per person. Tables can be made up on the night. Tickets are available from me, Sandra Colyer, 01634 362863. We are also having an Open Garden in Hempstead on 20th June plus a later auction. If you have any items/ services that you could offer for the auction, we would be extremely grateful, please contact me.

## VOLUNTEER TASK DAYS

Weekly throughout the year volunteers meet to undertake a range of tasks including maintenance work at Country Parks and Nature Reserves

Every Tuesday 10.00am – 2.00pm  
Capstone Farm Country Park, 01634 338191

Every Wednesday 10.00am – 3.00pm Ranscombe Farm Nature Reserve, Cuxton 01634 292062

Every Thursday 10.00am – 2.00pm  
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All are welcome to come and help.

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## Diary 2015

March 16th - Monday Hub, St Paul's Church, Parkwood,  
ME8 9PN, 10.00am - 12.30pm all welcome.

March 16th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 2nd Mar).

March 16th - Rainham Wives, 'Celebrating 30 years of  
Care' (Wisdom Hospice) talk Martyn Reeves, (2nd Mar)

March 17th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,  
Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30 - 9.45pm £3.50, Eat  
in or Takeaway - Brian Nobbs. For Walks see  
www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

March 17th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'St. Patrick's Day' -  
Table-top pedestal arrangement, (see 3rd Mar).

March 18th - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Bredhurst  
Village Hall, Brian Everest, Illustrated Talk - 'Sweet  
Peas', Spring Show- Judge Mr G Chilmad, New  
Members Welcome, Ring 01634 233554 for details

March 18th - The Wigmore Lectures, Wigmore Library,  
Fairview Avenue, Tickets £3.75, Booking 01634  
337799, 8.00pm, Hattie Ellis - Spoonfuls of Honey

March 19th - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 - 4.00pm,  
Members Meeting, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley  
Road, Rainham. Visitors welcome for small entry  
charge per visit, Ring 01634 366276 for details.

March 19th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Paint a  
Landscape in 45 minutes, Mike Chantry, (see 5th Mar).

March 19th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board  
games tea and chat (see 5th March)

March 20th - Concert, St Mary's Church, Newington,  
Philharmonia Chamber Ensemble, 7.30pm, Tickets £12  
from 01795 842478 or laneatborden@btinternet.com.

March 20th - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club, 8.30pm,  
Bobby Wellins/ Simon Spillet Quintet, £10,  
Enquiries 01634 365352 or 07544 312743

March 21st - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium  
Centre, 9.00am - 12.30pm, Free entry, Stalls £5 from  
carole@cdadswell.freemove.co.uk or 07779 366054

March 21st - Rainham South Councillors Surgery,  
Parkwood Community Centre 10.00am - 12 noon. No  
appointment necessary.

March 21st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group Meet  
Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Len Valley Walk  
Archbishops Palace Maidstone ME15 6YE. For a 7  
mile easy walk finishing at Leeds Church car park  
ME17 1RL. Contact Stephen for details.

March 21st - Spring Fair, White Horse Pub 95 High  
Street, Rainham, Tesco Retired Staff raising funds for  
Alzheimer's, 11.00am - 4.00pm, details Senga Harmon  
07899 983126 or Carol Wooding 01622 741510

March 21st - Quiz Evening, 7.30pm, Rainham Oasthouse,  
admission £2.50 (£2 members) rolls available 6.00p each,  
for details ring Maggi 01634 610391

March 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Geoff  
07525 161766 geoff.rambler@me.com, 10.00am St  
Nicholas, Church Road, Otham, Maidstone TQ789540  
ME15 8SB for an 8 mile leisurely walk, fairly flat via  
Stoneacre and the Len Valley Walk.

March 22nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am  
Meet Andy Boorman 07881 933358 Conyer, The Ship  
PH limited parking GR962648 ME9 9HR. 6.5 mile  
easy/moderate walk using Saxon Shore Way. No dogs

March 22nd - Volunteer Task Day, Riverside Country  
Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Get involved at the Country  
parks by helping with some practical tasks on the site.  
It's a great opportunity to learn about the management  
and meet new people, ring 01634 337432 for details.

March 23rd - Rainham Wives, Springtime Posies and  
Poems, members evening, (see 2nd Mar).

March 24th - UPARA Coffee Morning, Upchurch Village  
Hall, 9.30am - 12.30pm. Members £1.50, Guests £2,  
New members welcome for details email Chairman  
David Powell davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

March 24th - Rainbow Whist Drive, (see 10th Mar).

March 25th - RainARA, 442 Club, Featherby Road,  
2.00pm. Talk on "Brought to book too - that's life!" by  
Mel Rees details Ray Kent 01634 373596  
chrisandray.kent@googlemail.com

March 25th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm In  
House Spring Show & Social Evening, United  
Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham.  
Members £2, Non Members £3 includes refreshments,  
details phone 01634 852519.

March 25th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm In  
House Spring Show & Social Evening, United  
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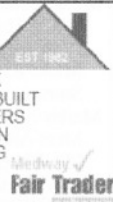
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## Diary 2015

March 25th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, A Year of  
the Debutante - Barbara Stevens, (see 11th Mar).

March 26th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Bon Marche Sale  
(see 5th March)

March 26th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service and  
Singalong, (see 5th Mar).

March 26th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and  
Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall,  
Woodside, Rainham, Ring Sylvia Wildridge 01634  
312038 for details.

March 27th - Medway Geographical Society, Byron Road  
School, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.00pm 'Progress in  
peoples' Republic of Bangladesh' - Dr Nilufar Imam,  
All welcome, contact 01634 362683.

March 28th - Craft and Table Top Market, Lower  
Halstow Memorial Hall, 11.00am - 2.00pm, To book  
a table call Kay 01795 844408

March 28th - Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night, 7.00 for  
7.30pm start, Twydall Church Hall, Gillingham, Tickets  
£5 each, Tables of 6 - 8, Book in advance, Bring your  
own Drink and Nibbles, Free tea, coffee and biscuits  
Free Parking, Phone 01634 233405 or 01634 375486

March 28th - Quiz Night, St Margaret's Junior School,  
7.00pm, tables of 8, £7 per person supper provided, to  
support a school in India, ring 01634 362863

March 29th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am  
Meet Mo Fleisig 07976 600393 Cowdeen Station,  
Blowers Hill car park for a 5.25 mile moderate walk  
with some stiles. No dogs

March 29th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet John  
billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk, 07749 760788 10.00am,  
Ightham Mote National Trust car park TQ584536 TN15  
0NT for a 12 mile strenuous circular walk. Some hills,  
could be slippery and muddy in places. Bring a picnic

March 29th - Up Close and Personal with Keith Jack,  
Rainham Theatrical Society, Curtain up 7.00pm, Box  
Office 0844 8793224 or www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

March 30th - Monday Hub, (see 16th Mar).

March 30th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 2nd Mar).

April 2nd - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board games  
etc. Tea and chat (see 5th March)

April 3rd - Passion Play, 2.00 - 3.15pm, Parkwood  
Green, Deanwood Drive, Free entry, details 01634  
230423 or e-mail passionplay15@outlook.com

April 3rd - St. Mary's Church Choir & Upchurch Choral  
Society, Reflections, Music and Readings for  
Easteride, 7.00pm, St. Mary's Church, Upchurch,  
Admission free. Donations to the Wisdom Hospice.

April 4th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am  
Meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Whitstable  
Station, Railway Ave car park (£2.50) CT5 1LH, 5.5  
mile linear coastal walk to Herne Bay, return by bus or  
walk! Contact Stephen for details. Dogs allowed

April 5th - 50th Anniversary St. Matthew's Church,  
Service of Holy Communion, 10.00am, Celebrant The  
Bishop of Rochester, Details Ninon and John Tice  
01634 360633 email ninandjon@btinternet.com

April 7th - Egg Art, Capstone Farm Country Park, 9.30 -  
11.30am, Discover the large number of different eggs  
created by Capstones birds to inspire your own egg  
design this Easter, accompanied children aged 3 - 12  
years. £3 per child, Ring 01634 338191 for details.

April 7th - Afternoon Dance, 2.00 - 4.00pm, 44two Club,  
Featherby Road, Gillingham, All proceeds go to the  
Alzheimer's Society, £3.50 pay at the door, Drinks from  
the bar, Mr E W Grundy 01634 388053 for details.

April 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, Spring Show,  
(see 3rd Mar).

April 7th - GHS Floral Art Group, Imposed Night, (see  
3rd Mar).

April 7th - Rainbow Whist Drive, (see 10th Mar).

April 8th - Family Bushcraft, Capstone Farm Country  
Park, 9.30 - 12noon and 1.30 - 4.00pm, for all the  
family learning the basics of bushcraft, fire lighting to  
whistle making, Suitable for adults and accompanied  
children over 5 years old, £10 pp, Ring 01634 338191

April 8th - Family Birdwatching, Riverside Country Park,  
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