

ACTION FORUM

JUNE 2016
NUMBER 521

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



Rainham High Street decorated for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897. From the description David Wood provides, in his article on page 9, it would appear to be very similar to the banners and flags previously used in 1887 for the Golden Jubilee. The inscriptions read 'Greatness and Goodness' (the one visible outside the church) '1837- 60 Not Out - 1897' 'The Best of Queens' and 'Our Queen - God Bless Her'. The sailor suits worn by the little boys on the right were popularised by the naval career of Prince George. Later as George V he was nicknamed 'the sailor King'.

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AF
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Editorial

This month we are in a celebratory mood. Since her actual 90th birthday in April various events have been held to congratulate HM The Queen. June, with hopefully better weather, has always been regarded the official birthday month with the annual Trooping of the Colour in Horse Guards Parade. This year naturally many more events are planned. We can only admire the stamina of the Royal couple, Prince Phillip at 95 and the Queen at 90, who show no signs of flagging and dutifully undertake engagements which would exhaust many of their much younger subjects. Our local villages are joining in the fun. Bredhurst has a Royal Coffee Morning and Charity Sale on 7th June and Lower Halstow is devoting the weekend of 10th to 12th June to various events. If you would like to join them I am sure you will be very welcome - even if you are a 'foreigner' from outside the village!

At the end of the month once again Bredhurst takes the lead in remembering a national event. On a rather more sombre note this is the 100 anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. Little did the 'Tommies' know as they prepared themselves on June 30th 1916 - the eve of the big push - that the glorious victory envisaged by the Generals would actually become a 141 day long stalemate resulting in one of the highest casualty rates of the whole bloody conflict. A vigil to commemorate this date is being held at Bredhurst Church. Many families will have a relative 'lost at the Somme' and everyone who wishes to remember is welcome to slip in and out of the church as they wish during the two hour programme. Gillingham Methodist Church are also holding a Charity Concert 'Songs for the Somme' on June 18th. Few people are alive today who can remember those days of fighting. The recent death of 116 year old Susannah Mushatt Jones from New York leaves another 116 year old lady Emma Morano of Verbania in Italy as the oldest verifiable supercentenarian. She is the last person in the world to have touched three centuries with a birthdate of November 29th 1899. In the UK there are apparently 191 men and women who are 107 years or older (the oldest is Gladys Hooper, 113, from Ryde). They would have been 7+ years old at the beginning of the battle and I am sure, as events from long ago stay with us even when old age robs us of our short term memory, many will have vivid recollection of the 1916 Battle of the Somme.

June of course hosts many other social gatherings from Fetes to Flower Shows, a Moonlit walk, Concerts, Shows and Pampering Sessions, take your pick, read on to see which you will enjoy and join in the experience. Have a very good month, we will be with you again in July.

Correspondence

ROYAL COFFEE MORNING & Charity Sale

Dear Editor
 In recognition of H.M. Queen's 90th birthday celebrations the committee and friends of Bredhurst Village Hall will be holding this event, on Tuesday 7th June from 10.30am - 200pm, at the Hall. There will be memorabilia on display of H.M. Queen over the years, including items from the Royal Yacht and one of her visits to Medway. Merchandise of The Royal British Legion will be available, as will a large raffle, and items of all descriptions in the charity sale. Coffee, Tea and homemade cakes also available. All proceeds from refreshments and raffle will be donated to the Royal British Legion, and from the sale, to Bredhurst Church Charity Shop. The shop at the rear of the hall will also be open.

Yours sincerely
 June Cox 01634 268544

JOIN IN THE FUN

Dear Editor
 Lower Halstow will celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday with a Sing-A-Long and Snippets Session on Friday 10th June at the Memorial Hall from 7.30pm - 9.30pm. A fun and informal evening to which all are very welcome, tea and coffee will be available. On Saturday 11th June from 3.00 to 7.00pm we will have a Family Fun Afternoon on The Recreation Ground, with live music, barbeque, children's rides, bar, bouncy castle and more. From 2.30 to 4.30pm on Sunday 12th June St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow will host 'Cream Teas and Those Two Ladies', an opportunity to visit this wonderful little church, in a unique setting. There is no obligation to stay to the Short Thanksgiving Service which will close our weekend of celebration at 5.00pm. We look forward to seeing you at any or all of these celebratory events.

Yours sincerely
 Kay Howard-Challis
 01795 844409

MADE IN DAGENHAM THE MUSICAL

Dear Editor,
 "Made in Dagenham the Musical" is coming to The Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone from 8th - 11th June. YOLO Productions are proud to bring audiences this funny, touching and timeless show which is based on the 2010 film, which centred on the true-life events of the Ford sewing machinists strike of 1968. Their actions led to the creation of the Equal Pay Act 1970. Made in Dagenham shows how ordinary people can

do extraordinary things when they stand together. Performances are at 7.30pm nightly with a matinee at 2.30pm; tickets are £15 (concessions £13) and can be obtained from the Hazlitt Box Office 01622 758611
 Gwyneth Loft

EXHIBITION OF URBAN LIFE FIGURE

Drawing in Ink and Crayon
 by John K Austin NDD ATD
 Wigmore Library, Fairview Avenue
 2nd - 30th June

Over more than two decades John Austin has been drawing people at Hempstead Valley and other retail outlets. These quick drawings of people going about their day to day business are termed 'Bus Stop Drawings'. The term indicates that they are there one minute and out of sight the next. These figures have been put into everyday situations like a Street Market or a Football Match. While at school in the 50s John was encouraged to go out and draw people and this still interests him in his 80s. The drawings for this exhibition are taken from the hundreds he has done over many years filling more than 60 sketch books.

'SONGS FOR THE SOMME'

Charity Concert
 Marking the Battle of the Somme Centenary covering 100 years of song
 Internationally renowned Soprano Christine Hubbard and Tenor Kenneth McCarthy.
 Saturday 18th June, 7.30pm
 Gillingham Methodist Church 100 Third Avenue, Gillingham, ME7 2LU
 Free parking opposite (Sports Hall car park)
 Tickets £8 each

From Medway Neighbourhood Watch Association, Medway Police Station, on the door. Enquiries contact 01634 792131 or secretarymnwha@outlook.com

CONCERT

The Friends of St Margaret's Church Rainham
 Concert featuring Medway Big Band
 'Swing Music for All'
 Saturday 25th June, 7.30 - 10.00pm
 St Margaret's Church Rainham
 Tickets (including drinks & nibbles) are available from the Church Office during office hours (Mon - Fri 9.30am - 12 noon), or contact 01634 230430 or 01634 379796
 Cost - £6 in advance or £7 on the night

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A VIGIL TO COMMEMORATE THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME 100 years ago.

In response to an invitation from the Government and the Royal British Legion, it has been decided to hold a vigil in St Peter's Church, Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst to recall the torturous "zero hour" - when soldiers waited to go over the top - in memory of the Battle of the Somme 100 years ago. The vigil will be held at sundown, 7.00 to 9.00pm on Thursday 30th June 2016 to keep the sacrifices of the First World War alive in the public consciousness. In all there were 141 days of Battle, but the human loss on that first day, 1st July was devastating. Our vigil will take place with readings, lighting of candles, some music and periods of quiet. People are invited to come and go as they wish any time between 7 - 9pm. The vigil will be led by Frances Barnes.

A commemorative tablet in St Peter's church dedicated to the fallen in WWI shows that local resident Charles Johnson who died on 9th September 1916, is buried in the Somme District. Other people in the area may also remember friends or family who died or were wounded in the Battle, and wish to acknowledge their sacrifice with us.

VINE COTTAGES

I am researching for a feature which involves Vine Cottages now known as Vineyard Crescent, off Otterham Quay Lane, Rainham. They were farm labourer cottages. The Botting family, William and Edith with children George, Albert, Percy and Gladys lived at No 2. I am searching for a photograph of the cottages. Grateful for anyone's help please!
 Mike Gunnill email mikegunnill@mac.com or ring 01634 373572.

BRING & BUY SALE

Longford Court, Longford Close, Rainham
 Saturday June 4th, 11.00am - 1.00pm.
 Refreshments available, we would love to see you

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Diary 2016

No charge is made for Diary entries
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af@thenet.uk.net or 5 Meresborough Cottages,
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Diary Copy Date: June 21st 2016

June 1st – 30th - Art Exhibition by Local Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman on show and For Sale in Walderslade Village Library
June 2nd – 30th - Exhibition of Urban Life Figure Drawing in Ink and Crayon by John K Austin NDD ATD Wigmore Library, Fairview Avenue
June 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Tania 07841 913561 office@taniapeitzker.com Upper Halling Court Farm Butchery & Country larder Car park assigned to Ramblers, please follow signs. TQ691643 ME2 1HR 3.5 mile leisurely walk along River Medway.
June 4th - Bring & Buy Sale, Longford Court, Rainham 11.00am – 1.00pm, Refreshments Available
June 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Julie/Trevor St Margarets at Cliffe free public car park beside Church TR359447 CT15 6AP 8 mile moderate Cliff top walk, Bring picnic lunch, Pub at end.
June 4th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham 7.30 – 10pm, new and experienced dancers welcome, with or without a partner, for more information ring 366189 or 388546
June 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 827249 St Nicholas Church, Ash GR 287583 CT3 2EN for an 8 mile fairly easy walk Undulating on roads, fields, grass and tracks. 5 Stiles. Dogs on leads contact walk leader
June 6th - Medway Scrabble Club, alt Mondays, 2.00 – 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, 01634 230500

June 7th - Royal Coffee Morning & Charity Sale, Bredhurst Village Hall, 10.30am - 2.00pm, H.M. Queen's 90th birthday celebrations, Memorabilia, Large Raffle, Coffee, Tea and homemade cakes, Shop rear of the hall open, queries June Cox 01634 268544
June 7th - Medway & Swale (West) Association for Breast Cancer, 7.00 – 9.00pm Medway Maritime Hospital, Area 7 Level 2, Talk on the work of a Magistrate, details 01634 861802 or 07761 853750
June 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm, Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane. Slugs and Snails - John Llewellyn-Jones, New members welcome, ring 01634 366276 for details.
June 7th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, 'VE Day Memories' - arrangement in an unusual container, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed, for details contact Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com
June 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Arthur/Jan 01634 711734 arthur.waters@sky.com Lower Upnor public car park TQ 763713 ME2 4XB for a 5 mile leisurely walk (one steep climb soon after the start). Pub at end with lunches.
June 8th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, Gardening World meet at 4.00pm for a demonstration, for details Rhonda Peck 07951 629444
June 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 6.30pm meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst for a 4 mile Evening walk. Undulating muddy if wet, No stiles or steps.
June 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, Life upon the Wicked Stage, Wilf Lower, for over 50s ring 01634 234712
June 9th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Village Hall behind Church, 2.00 – 4.00pm, Speaker Dean Caston "The Victoria Palace" New members always welcome ring 07583 343782.

June 10th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham every Friday 9.45am to help those who have lost a loved one. Join us for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.
June 10th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting Upchurch Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2 New Members Welcome For details email Chairman David Powell davidrpowell5@hotmail.co.uk
June 10th - Sing-A-Long and Snippets Lower Halstow Memorial Hall celebrates the Queen's 90th Birthday, 7.30pm – 9.30pm. All welcome, tea and coffee.
June 10th - Pamper Evening, 6.30 – 9.30pm, Parkwood Community Centre, £2, Treatments from £5, Refreshments available, Raffle/Tombola All proceeds to Demelza Hospice, tables at £10 contact Margaret Lewis: 01634 362898 e-mail: feb1636@sky.com
June 10th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, 7.15pm, Byron Road School, Members Evening, details contact Ron Baker 01634 854982
June 11th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group Meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 London Capital Ring Walk - stage 5 start Priory Gardens, Highgate for a 9 mile walk via Stoke Newington, finish Hackney Wick
June 11th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, 9.00am – 12.30pm Free entry, Stalls £10 from carole@cdadswell.freeserve.co.uk or 07779 366054
June 11th - Lower Halstow Memorial Hall celebrates the Queen's 90th Birthday, Family Fun on The Recreation Ground, 3.00 – 7.00pm
June 12th - An afternoon with The Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe. Tickets £6 include cream tea from The Parish Office 01634 853459, Hilda 01634 932135 or email gillinghamparishchurch@gmail.com
June 12th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am meet John Williams 01622 764821 07977 614033 Frittenden The Street park by St Mary's Church for a 5 mile on roads, fields, grass and tracks undulating with muddy bits 10 Stiles Dogs on leads contact walk leader
June 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Ade 01634 306405 adeballard@yahoo.co.uk Hadlow village by The Square TQ634497 TN11 0DA for a 6.6 mile leisurely walk, lovely views, Bring picnic lunch. Pub at end with lunches.
June 12th - St. Margaret's Church Lower Halstow celebrates the Queen's 90th Birthday, Cream Teas and Those Two Ladies 2.30pm – 4.30pm, Short Thanksgiving Service, 5.00pm

June 13th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm, Organist - John Mann, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694
June 13th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham meets 2nd Monday evening each month to help those still in employment who have lost a loved one. Join us for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.
June 13th - Community Nativity Play Meeting Wigmore, ring 01634 230423 or claire.schofield01@gmail.com
June 13th - Rainham Flower Club, second Monday each month 7.30pm, St Matthews Community Centre, Wigmore ME8 0NX Competition 'Garden Party' design a summer hat to wear. Visitors welcome for details www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk 01634 864572.
June 14th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, The Love of Iris and Their Cultivation - Sue Marshall, Members £1, Non members £1.50, All Welcome, ring 01634 852519
June 15th - Wigmore Ladies Club, 2.00pm, Howard Hall, Woodside, cheerful group of ladies would love you to join us. Just come along or 01634 388912 for details.
June 16th - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 - 4.00pm. Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community Centre, Granary Close, Rainham, Speaker "Rattling My Family Bones". Visitors welcome for small charge Ring 01634 366276
June 16th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Strawberry Tea with entertainment Kingfisher Singers, (see 9th June)
June 16th - Hempstead Leisure Club. Outing to Ashford Outlet followed by Strawberry Tea at Lathe Barn. No local meeting.
June 17th - UpARA, Village Walk, 10.00am from Village Hall, new members welcome (see 10th June).
June 17th - Hempstara Whist Afternoon, 1.30pm, Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead, all abilities welcome, partner not required, details ring Eunice 01634 231664.
June 17th - Wander with Wisdom, 8.00pm, 10k sponsored Moonlit Walk starting from Medway Rugby Club, Rochester. All under 18s must be accompanied by an adult www.fowh.org.uk or 01634 831163.
June 17th - Jazz Gig, The Clarke Tracey Quintet, Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Admission £10, Details 01634 365352 or 07544 312743

Continued on Page 11

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WANDER WITH WISDOM
Friday 17th June, 8.00pm
Dress in your neon best and Light up Medway at our
10k sponsored Moonlit Walk starting from Medway
Rugby Club, Rochester past famous landmarks.
Sign up and glow now @ www.fowh.org.uk
Call us on 01634 831163 to register over the phone.

JUNE FAIR
Fairview Community Primary School
Saturday 18th June, 1.30pm
Zorbs, Beat the Goalie, Coconut Shy,
Bouncy Castle, Archery, Games, Ice cream van,
refreshment, BBQ and lots more.
50p entrance for all. Come and enjoy the fun.

ELEVATE DANCE COMPANY
St Matthew's Church Community Centre, Wigmore
An Evening of Contemporary Dance Works
to Challenge, Lighten and Inspire.
Saturday 18th June, 8.00pm
Tickets £6 Adults Children Under 15 - £3
01732 845550 or e-mail annehlin@yahoo.co.uk

FLOWER FESTIVAL & CONCERT
St Augustine's Church, Rock Avenue, Gillingham.
Saturday 18th June 10.00am – 5.00pm
& Sunday 19th June, 12noon - 5.00pm
Celebrating the first 100 years
Concert - Saturday 18th June, 7.00pm
Classical, Jazz and Folk music amongst the flowers
Tickets £3 to include interval soft drink
from David Hodges 01634 571849

ST. PETER'S SUMMER FETE
Village Hall, Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst
Saturday, 25th June, 2.00 – 4.30pm
Bredhurst Timeline Pageant, Stalls, Games & Races,
Applause Outdoors 2016, Beat the Goalie, Bouncy
Castle, BBQ, Strawberries & Cream and much more.
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Saturday 25th June, 7.30pm
St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, ME8 0AX
Free Entry, Retiring Collection in Support of
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We look forward to welcoming you to St Matthew's.

LEGALLY BLONDE
Kentish Players Central Theatre, Chatham
Thursday 30th June – Saturday 2nd July, 7.30pm
Saturday Matinee 2.00pm
Omigod you guys! Legally Blonde The Musical is
the story of college sweetheart, who doesn't take no
for an answer. When her boyfriend dumps her for
someone serious, she puts down the credit card, hits
the books and heads for Harvard Law!
Tickets from £13.50 (concessions available)
Central Theatre Box Office 01634 338338
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SUMMER FAYRE
Miers Court Primary School,
Silverspot Close, Rainham
Saturday 2nd July 11.00am – 2.00pm
Traditional Fayre games, BBQ, raffle, Tombolas,
strawberries and cream and lots of stalls

SUMMER FAYRE
Deanwood Primary School
Friday 8th July, 3.15 – 5.30pm
Adults 50p, Children 30p, Pre-School - Free
Something for all the family
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STALLHOLDERS NEEDED AT CRAFT FAYRE
in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital
Saturday 29th October, 10.30 - 2.30pm
St Matthews Church Hall, Drewery Drive
Tables will be provided and cost is £10 in advance.
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR MAY

The RSPB describes its Rainham Marshes Bird Reserve, on the north bank of the Thames, as one of the few remaining areas of mediaeval, Thameside, marsh land in the London area. Passengers on the Eurostar or High Speed Train to or from St Pancras can be forgiven for not noticing the reserve as they speed through a scene of largely brick and concrete. The approach to the reserve by road is just as inauspicious. From Kent, it is via the Dartford Tunnel and the mainly industrial landscape around Purfleet. For those making a first visit, the view from the reserve's visitor centre can however come as a pleasant surprise. The three adjoining marshes that comprise the reserve – Aveley, Wennington and Rainham – stretch along the north bank of the Thames for three miles. They were created from saltings of the River Thames by the building of an embankment in the 14th century to keep out tidal waters. They are grazed by cattle, as they would have been for hundreds of years. In spring, male lapwings can be seen tumbling from the sky, above the cattle, in their mating displays. The Nat West Tower, ten miles away, can be seen on the horizon, as can The Shard, Britain's tallest building, near London Bridge Station. On the day of my own visit, having been advised by a volunteer warden what to look out for, I set off on my perambulation around the reserve. My first stop was at the "Marshland Discovery Reserve" hide where a pair of kingfishers had made a nest hole in an artificial bank intended to attract sand martins. A long line of photographers were vying for position in the hide and whenever a kingfisher flew onto a stick that had been positioned near the nest, there was a furious clicking of camera apertures. Having enjoyed some very good views of my own of the kingfishers, I resumed my walk along one of the many dykes of brackish water that both drain the marshes and keep the cattle from straying. In them grow common reed and other vegetation. I could hear the calls of sedge and reed warblers emanating from the reed beds. Female cuckoos lay their eggs in the nests of these species, among others, and it was ominous that I heard, in the

distance, the familiar call of a male cuckoo. I came across a total of three little grebes, diving perhaps for small fish in the dykes. I kept my eyes open for water voles, the reserve having one of the largest and densest populations of the mammals in the UK, but I failed to come across one.

At the "Shooting Butts" hide I settled down for the picnic lunch that I had bought at the visitor centre cafe. I looked out over Aveley Marshes where the cattle's hooves have helped to create tussocky grassland, which is used by breeding birds such as lapwing, snipe, redshank, skylark, yellow wagtail and meadow pipit. A couple of male lapwings were giving their spectacular display flights in the air above the marshes. They were engaged in exuberant twisting and tumbling, accompanied by mewing calls. I could hear a skylark, high in the air above me, pouring out a wonderful song of fast and varied warbling. Its song is one of the most evocative sounds of spring. It was uplifting to see quite a number of migrant swifts swooping about, at low level, catching flies and other insects over the marshes. They would be passing through, on their way north, using the marshes, in effect, as a service station. There has been a dramatic fall in the number of swifts that have been returning each spring to breed in this country. According to Oxford University Museum of Natural History, the numbers of young swifts fledging from their nests in the tower of the museum building have fallen steeply over the past six or more years. Swifts mainly feed on an aerial "plankton" of small flying insects, such as aphids, that are lifted into the sky by warm, rising air currents. Prolonged cold, wet or windy weather is detrimental to the parent swifts' ability to feed themselves and their young. Many adult birds at Oxford have at times abandoned breeding attempts and others have lost their chicks through starvation. After lunch I ambled back slowly towards the visitor centre. On my left, Eurostar and High Speed Rail trains whooshed by on a concrete viaduct. Through the supports of the viaduct I could see a scrap lorry yard. In complete contrast, on my right, was a timeless, pastoral scene of grazing cattle. In between these totally different scenes, visitors were passing backwards and forwards along the perimeter paths and

board walks of the reserve. It was good to see experienced bird watchers, festooned with binoculars, telescopes and cameras rubbing along nicely with family groups and the occasional class of excited school children.

Joe Ennis

QUEEN VICTORIA'S JUBILEE Celebrations in Rainham

On June 21st 1887 early morning peels rang out from St Margaret's church bells and at intervals for the remainder of the day to signify Queen Victoria's jubilee. Rainham residents had raised £50 to fund the celebration and had formed a committee to organise it. Flags and banners of red, blue and white decorated the centre of Rainham. Flags from the barges Agremont, Virginia and Director fluttered on lines above the main road at the western end of the village. The Cricketers pub exhibited a line of flags and transparencies of the Queen, the Prince of Wales's plume and a representation of the crown. At the vicarage a bit further along the High Street flags with the words 'God Save the Queen' on a crimson background and a transparency of the Prince of Wales's plume of feathers were displayed.

A line of flags spanned the High Street and were also displayed in the windows of nearby buildings. A banner with the words 'The Queen, God Bless Her' stretched across the street from George Quinell's grocery shop in Broad Walk while George Whayman's drapery shop displayed a banner with the words 'God Save the Queen, Long May She Reign.' Frank Frost's grocery shop displayed a portrait of the Queen wreathed in flowers while Men's outfitter Edwin Jelly displayed a banner with the words 'Long to Reign Over Us, God Save the Queen' on a crimson background. At 'The Chestnuts,' owned by Thomas Stanley Wakeley, the colours of the barge 'Richmond' surmounted the building accompanied by a transparency of a crown surrounded by flags while at Mardale House, the home of Doctor Penfold, a transparency of the Royal Arms surrounded by a portrait of Queen Victoria decorated the building. English and French flags covered the White Horse Inn with beautiful floral decorations in the windows. There were also illuminated transparencies of Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales's plume and an image of the crown displayed for viewing at night. At 12.30 pm Rainham children assembled at the

National School in Station Road with their teachers then followed by senior citizens they entered St Margaret's church. Reverend Charles Cobb took the service and commemorated Queen Victoria's fifty year reign. Organist John Longley played a jubilee march followed by hymns sung by the choir and congregation. The service concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.

Crowds of people waited outside the church and amongst these the local branch of the Druids wearing costumes and holding banners sat on horseback while the Foresters with regalia were lined up with them ready for a procession. The procession moved down the High Street led by children from the local schools carrying flags and banners, next by the Druids and Foresters.

With over 1,000 people taking part the procession headed towards Berengrove Park where swings and amusements were provided. Free dinners were given to all parishioners over 55 years old and tables were placed under a row of trees at the bottom end of the park for this. After the old people had taken their places Reverend Cobb gave thanks and proposed a toast to the Queen. The playing of a verse from the National Anthem followed then the dinners were eaten. Immediately after this the children were fed but only those who wore a jubilee medal were allowed to have a meal.

An estimated 2,000 people attended the event in Berengrove Park which included dancing and music provided by St Paul's Fife and Drum Band from Chatham then a display of colourful fireworks at dusk brought the event to a close. A huge bonfire was also lit on White Hill and could be seen for miles around. The celebration turned out to be a great success for the village and the biggest event witnessed by residents for many years.

David Wood.

GILLINGHAM MALE VOICE CHOIR (GMVC)

The Gillingham Male Voice Choir rehearses every Wednesday evening at Gillingham Golf Club, starting at 8.00pm and is always looking for new members. The Choir has a wide repertoire and performs at numerous concerts and events, raising money for local and national charities. So if you enjoy singing come along to one of our rehearsals and join in. For further information contact Mike Osborne on 01634 365963

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Diary 2016

June 18th - Rainham South Councillors Surgery,
Parkwood Youth Centre, 9.30am - 12noon, no
appointment necessary.

June 18th - Fairview Community Primary School, June
Fair, 1.30pm, Zorbs, Beat the Goalie, Coconut Shy,
Bouncy Castle, Archery, Games, Ice cream van,
refreshment, BBQ and lots more. 50p entrance for all.

June 18th & 19th - Flower Festival at St Augustine's
Church, Rock Avenue, Gillingham, Celebrating the first
100 years through flowers and memorabilia. Saturday
10.00am - 5.00pm, Sunday 12noon - 5.00pm

June 18th - 'Songs for The Somme', Charity Concert
covering 100 years of song, Soprano Christine Hubbard
and Tenor Kenneth McCarthy, 7.30pm, Gillingham
Methodist Church ME7 2LU Tickets £8 each on the
door. 01634 792131 or secretarymnhwa@outlook.com

June 18th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 4th June).

June 18th - Elevate Dance Company, St Matthew's Church
Community Centre, Drewery Drive, ME8 0NX, 8.00pm
Evening of Contemporary Dance Works to Challenge,
Lighten and Inspire. Tickets Adults - £6 Under 15 - £3
from 01732 845550 or e-mail annechlin@yahoo.co.uk

June 19th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Anne Bond & Pat Wells 07778 302866 07804

837155 Teston Country park cark park (fee) GR
708532 ME18 5BX for a 5 mile circular mainly flat
walk, stiles and steps Dogs on leads contact walk leader

June 19th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Ray
01634 315967 Bluebell Hill Common Road near to
Robin Hood PH TQ733628 ME5 9RJ for a 5 mile
moderate circular walk. Bring picnic lunch, Pub at end.

June 20th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 6th June).

June 21st - Medway RSPB Local Group Talk, 7.30 -
9.45pm, Parkwood Community Centre, £3.50 Any
Garden can be a Wildlife Garden - Maureen Rainey For
Walks see: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway

June 21st - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Summer Solstice' - a
petite landscape and miniature basket, (see 7th June).

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June 22nd - All Saints Women's Fellowship, The

Preservers - Anna Marie Lawrence, (see 8th June).

June 23rd - Hempstead Leisure Club. AGM followed by
Celebration Tea for the Queen's Birthday (see 9th June)

June 23rd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Sailing into
Danger, Ley Liberson, (see 9th June).

June 25th - St. Peter's Summer Fete, Village Hall,
Bredhurst, 2.00 - 4.30pm, Pageant, Stalls, Games &
Races, Applause Outdoors, BBQ, Strawberries &
Cream and more. Adults 50p, Children Free

June 25th - The Salvation Army Chatham Corps Band,
7.30pm, St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, ME8
0AX Free Entry. Retiring Collection in Support of
L'Auberge des Migrants, Calais.

June 25th - Medway Big Band 'Swing Music for All',
Friends of St Margaret's Church Rainham, in Church
7.30 - 10.00pm Tickets - £6 in advance, £7 on night
(inc drinks & nibbles) from Church Office (Mon-Fri
9.30am - 12 noon), or 01634 230430 or 379796

June 26th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Ade
01634 306405 adeballard@yahoo.co.uk East Malling
High Street near the railway bridge free car park
TQ702570 ME19 6AJ for a 6 mile leisurely walk with
views down to the Medway Valley. Bring picnic lunch.
Pub at end with lunches.

June 26th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Mo Fleisig 07976 600393 Horton Kirby Sports
Ground GR 561684 DA4 9GR for a 5 mile easy
undulating walk along Darent Valley Path using fields
and riverside. Dogs on leads contact walk leader

June 28th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch Village
Hall, 9.30am, Guests £2, (see 10th June).

June 29th - Gillingham Horticultural Society 7.15pm
start, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road,
Gillingham, "Fuchsias and Pelargoniums" - Speaker
Brian Carline. £2 members £3 non-members, includes
refreshments. Details Paul 07801 568157.

June 30th - Hempstead Leisure Club. Speaker John
Mills "Life Inside" (see 9th June)

June 30th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting -
Bingo, (see 9th June).

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Diary 2016

June 30th - Vigil to commemorate Battle of the Somme

100 years ago, St Peter's Church, Hurstwood Road,
Bredhurst remembering "zero hour" - when soldiers
waited to go over the top, 7.00 - 9.00pm

June 30th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall,
Woodside, all welcome, more details from Sylvia
Wildridge 01634 312038.

June 30th - July 2nd - Legally Blonde Kentish
Players, Central Theatre, Chatham, 7.30pm Sat Mat
2.00pm. Tickets from £13.50 (cons available) 01634
338338 or www.medwayticketslive.co.uk

July 1st - UpARA, Village Walk, (see 17th June)

July 1st - Games Afternoon, Lower Halstow Memorial
Hall, 2.00 - 4.00pm - Euchre, Whist, Rummicub,
Dominoes, Scrabble and a warm welcome, £1.50 entry
includes a cup of tea/coffee biscuits. No Joining Fee

July 2nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, Meet
Stephen Manning 07551 712438 London Capital Ring
Walk - stage 6, Start at Hackney Wick for a 10 mile
walk via Beckton District Park, finish at Woolwich

July 2nd - Summer Fayre, Miers Court Primary
School, 11.00am - 2.00pm

July 3rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet
Tony/Ann 01634 406634 vajra.faulkner@gmail.com
Adisham rail station [parking fee]. TR233539 CT3 3JE
for a 6.5 mile leisurely walk. Good views, fairly flat.
No stiles, can be muddy, bring picnic lunch.

July 3rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,
meet Roger Danks 07866 971819 Higham Station car
park (free) GR 716727 for a 6 mile Charles Dickens &
Higham circular walk, couple of climbs using roads,
tracks & fields. Dogs on leads contact walk leader

July 4th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 6th June).

July 5th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30 pm,
Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Survival of

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July 5th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Plain Sailing' -
asymmetrical triangle secondary placement, (7th June).
July 6th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Frank
/Mim layby in Penshurst Road (B2176) in Penshurst
TQ526438 TN11 8BN for a 7.5 mile moderate circular
walk, muddy Bring picnic, Pub and tea rooms at end.
July 6th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 6.30pm meet
Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Spekes Road, for a 4
mile Evening walk across Darland Banks. GR 795647
ME7 3RS 2 steep slopes. No stiles & No steps.
July 7th - Hempstead Leisure Club. Whist, Board Games
tea and chat (see 9th June)
July 7th - Wigmore Thursday Club, The Train that
Jumped the Gap, Richard Emmett, (see 9th June)
July 8th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting, (see 10th June).
July 8th - Deanwood Primary School, Summer Fayre,
3.15 - 5.30pm, Adults 50p, Children 30p, Pre-School -
Free, Tombolas, Games, Crafts, a Raffle, Books, Gifts,
a Bouncy Castle, an Ice Cream Van and more! Hot
dogs, chips, ice creams and hot and cold drinks. Contact
t.kington@btinternet.com for details.
July 9th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium
Centre, (see 11th June).
July 9th - 5th Annual Dog Show, Lower Halstow
Memorial Hall, 10.00am Registration, Judging 11am
July 10th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Jim
07807 896995 lewislad@hotmail.com Patribourne
Road in Bridge, behind the Red Lion Pub, not Pub Car
Park. TR183542 CT4 5LB for a 6 mile disused
railway walk. Bring picnic lunch, Pub at end.
July 10th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Gill Smith 01622 679731 07999 858981 Paddock
Wood Railway Station (Fee £1) GR 671453 TN12 6ER
for a 5.5 mile flat walk on roads and grass, 2 stiles,
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