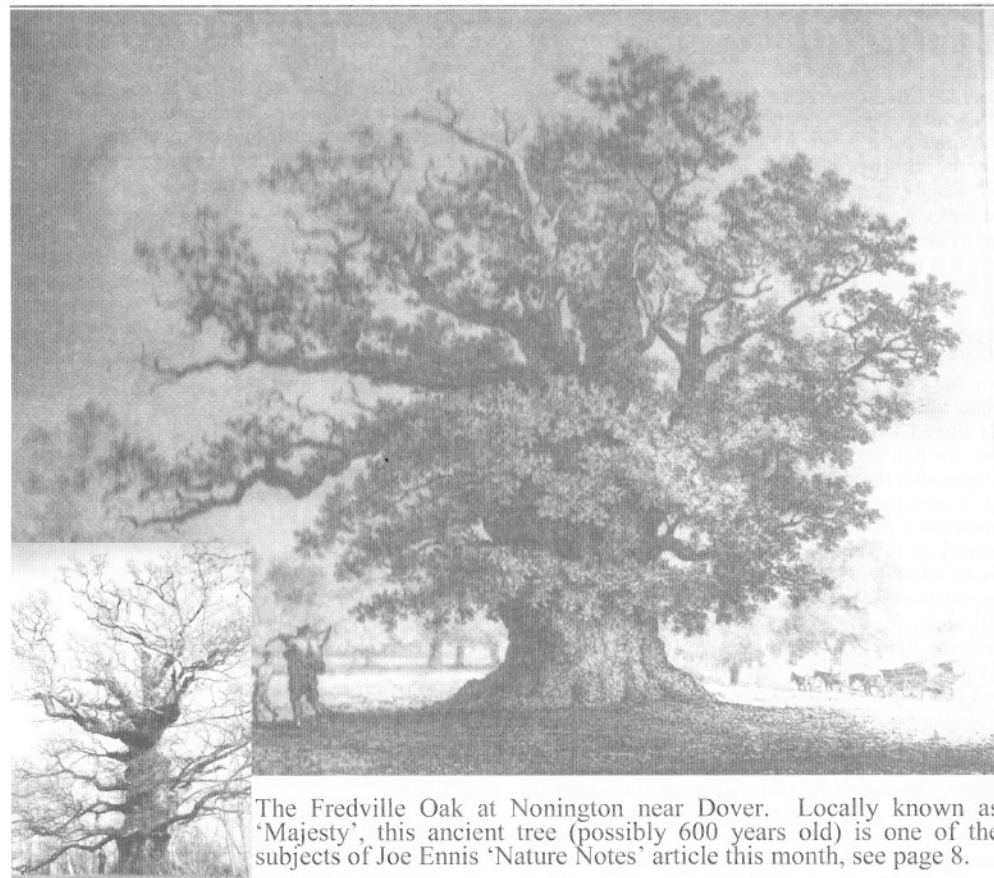


ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

NOVEMBER 2016
NUMBER 526



The Fredville Oak at Nonington near Dover. Locally known as 'Majesty', this ancient tree (possibly 600 years old) is one of the subjects of Joe Ennis 'Nature Notes' article this month, see page 8.

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Next Issue December 3rd 2016
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Editorial

On a beautiful autumn half term day we decided to share the 'M25 experience' of my weekly visit to the grandchildren near Woking and meet at the British Wildlife Centre (www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk) just over the border from Kent into Surrey. Although only a 45 minute journey away, on the A22 near Lingfield, the centre was new to me. Created about twenty years ago by an enthusiast on the site of his former dairy farm it is primarily an educational establishment, fully booked for the foreseeable future with school parties and other groups during term time but open to the general public at the weekend and during school holidays. Not cheap, currently £37 for a family of four, but a very good day out if you have primary school aged children or grandchildren to entertain. We arrived soon after 10 when it opened and had to coax our five year and three year old boys away at 4.30pm after the final flying display by four species of native owls (including an enormous eagle owl – apparently a pair of these can be found nesting somewhere in Kent). Every half hour throughout the day an informative 10 minute talk was delivered by the enthusiastic, knowledgeable and caring staff introducing the assorted animals. Interaction with and questions from the visitors were welcomed and even though they must have given the talks many times each sounded fresh and original. These are given at the enclosures so we learned about red squirrels with them running around our feet and even jumping on some bystanders. The foxes, wildcats, otters, red deer, badgers and pine martens stayed in their runs but with the reward of food from the keepers delighted us with their antics. Only the hedgehogs it being late October remained resolutely curled up asleep. Even the badgers have learned to wake at 3.00pm for a quick walk around and a snack before returning to the sett until their more normal nightly scavenge. The highlight for Jamie (aged 5) was a stoat running round and round the wire netting alleyways and going to and fro over his head – I think he would have stayed there all afternoon if the lure of the playground had not called. All in all a very good day out, lovely for children but there were also teenagers and adults practising their wildlife photography skills with guaranteed sitters although few of them would stay still long enough for me (including the children). Only a couple of months left to prepare for Christmas

so of course we include details of the many Fayres Sales, Bazaars and Concerts which will be held during the next few weeks. Rainham Cricket Club are delighted to be able to report that work has started on their new pavilion, read more about this and their progress this season on pages 3 and 9. Have a very good month, enjoy the sunshine even though daylight hours are short and we will be with you again in December.

Correspondence

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Dear Editor

We are looking to recruit some more volunteer drivers to assist with our locals clubs and groups. In particular a group which meet regularly in Gillingham on a Monday. If you can spare a few hours a month to help out, then please contact Jo Wilkinson at Kent Association for the Blind on 01622 691357 or email jo.wilkinson@kab.org.uk for more details.

Yours sincerely

Jo Wilkinson (Volunteer Coordinator)
Kent Association for the Blind
www.kab.org.uk

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Dear Editor

The 4th Gillingham (Rainham) Sea Scout Group will hold a Christmas Fayre on Saturday 19th November from 10.00am -12noon at the Scout Headquarters in Berengrave Lane. There will be a tombola stall, Osborne books, guess the weight of the cake, Help the Heroes, candy floss and more. Entry is free and refreshments will be on sale.

Kind regards

Cathy Burns

Group Secretary

4thgillinghamsecretary@gmail.com

RACE NIGHT

Dear Editor

On Saturday 19th November at Hempstead Village Hall, Hempstead Road, ME7 3QR there will be a Race Night from 7.45pm in aid of Valgrays Border Collie & Animal Rescue who recently had all their fundraising goods, banners, charity gazebos and horse trailer stolen. There is an ongoing investigation. Entry is £7.50 per head, bring your own nibbles and drinks. There will be a raffle, cards and cakes for sale and some games in the interval.

If there are any businesses that would like to sponsor and name any of the races for £25, please get in touch. For tickets please phone 01634 364024, text 07505365019 penniesfromheaven@virginmedia.com

Many thanks

Denize Halfpenny, Sheila Shepherd
Race Night Co-Ordinators

RAINHAM CRICKET CLUB

Rainham Cricket Club members and committee would like to thank all who have supported us, from near and far, over the past few months. We particularly wanted to thank all who came to our Beer Festival in July – we had a wonderful day, the weather was very kind to us, the entertainment and food was enjoyed by many people young and not so young. Your support, together with funds from Sport England and ECB, has enabled us to start the building of our new Pavilion. We handed over the site to the Darren Flegg Builders on 10th October and work has already started. It was quite a sad occasion getting the old pavilion (built in 1976) emptied of years of memorabilia, some of which we have kept and other items were 'recycled'. Hopefully, if we have a mild winter and your continued support, the building will be ready for use when the new season starts next April. We will keep you informed of the progress. We do, however, need further funds to enable us to complete the building and grounds. If you feel that you can help with ideas, donations, sponsorship or would like more details please email neilmccue2@virginmedia.com.

WE ARE MARIE CURIE

You probably know of the charity but did you know there is a Marie Curie shop in Rainham Precinct? The shop is near Wilko and opposite the dry cleaners. Recently we had a recruitment day and though people were generous with money (I think they appreciated the cakes) we were sad because no-one was able to give time to help at the shop. Yes, it can be hard work and not suited to everyone as there are stairs but we are a very happy team. As they say "many hands make light work" so please call in and find out how You can help an important charity. We Need You.

GILLINGHAM MALE VOICE CHOIR

GMVC have a busy schedule ahead with concerts in December. In early December we have our Christmas Concert at Gillingham Methodist Church (Second Avenue, Gillingham) which takes place on the evening of 3rd December, following that we will be singing Carols at Hempstead Valley on the 10th December from 12noon to 2.00pm in support of Macmillan Cancer. Rehearsals for this busy programme are in full swing and no one is rehearsing harder than Bill Law. Bill is a proud Scot who came south some years ago and is a long-time member of the choir, in fact he is the only founding member still active. Bill sings in the

Baritone section and was somewhat of a mentor to me when I joined some years ago. Bill does not confine himself to the choir as he is also a stalwart of the Gillingham Operatic and Dramatic Society (The GODS) having appeared in many productions with them over the years. He also does the occasional bit of film extra work (Support Artists as they are known in the trade). He is also the least embarrassed Gills football club supporter I have ever met. He seems to enjoy the scenic railway style of ups and downs that Gills supporters have to endure each season. He laughs just as much at their failures as he does at their successes and seems just as baffled as everybody else at the erratic nature of their season. He usually says at the beginning of the season "The Gills are going up this year" which changes to "We are going to make the play offs" which in turn becomes "We are going to have a good cup run, we might get Arsenal" as the season progresses, which again changes to "Don't worry we are definitely going to stay up." Bill says that he intends to carry on being a member of the choir for many years to come and we all hope he will be. This short profile of Bill will give you a flavour of what the usual choir members are about and why GMVC rehearsals are so enjoyable

Neil Smith - Secretary GMVC
Emailsmith66@virginmedia.com

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Diary 2016

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Diary Copy Date: November 22nd 2016

November 1st – 30th - Art Exhibition Paintings by Local Artists Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman will be on show and For Sale in Rainham Library, Birling Avenue, between 1st & 30th November.

November 5th - 'Silent Auction' Upchurch Village Hall, 10.00 to 12.00noon in aid of Hall maintenance. Entry £2.50 pp includes a drink and cake.

November 5th – 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 ring 366189 or 388546

November 6th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 9.50am meet Graham, graham.jenkinson@blueyonder.co.uk 07989 753278, Tonbridge to Watlingtonbury Meet promptly in Watlingtonbury public car park off Bow Road near the traffic lights. ME18 5DD, TQ691534 for a 10 mile moderate linear walk along the River Medway finishing 3.00pm approx. 10.00am bus to Tonbridge. Bring picnic lunch. The perfect walk for those who hate hills.

November 6th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet David Brown 07815 106791 George Inn, The Street, Newnham ME9 0LL GR954577 for a 6 mile undulating walk with hilly sections using roads, fields and grassland together with woodland areas. There are no stiles or steps. No Dogs

November 6th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am – 2.00pm Meet at the Volunteers block near the Orchard Car Park. For more details ring 01634 338191

November 7th - Medway Scrabble Club, alternate Mondays, 2.00 – 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, details 01634 230500

November 8th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, 'Putting Your Fuchsias to Bed' Talk – Sid Garcia, Members £1, Non members £1.50 All Welcome ring 01634 852519

November 9th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Jim, jimbush46@btinternet.com Challock Community Hall TN25 4AT, TR012506 for a 5 mile leisurely circular walk finishing at 12.45pm approx. bring picnic for midway break. Pub at end.

November 9th - Medway East U3A: Rainham, 2.00pm, Rainham Mark Social Club, 56 London Rd, ME8 6YX Dean Caston will be talking about The Royal Variety Performance the shows and its stars. Visitors £1 Phone 07895 890 635 for further details

November 9th – All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Life in Soviet Russia 1970-90 – Irina Fridman, for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

November 3rd - Hempstead Leisure Club, Talk "A Vicar's Life". Village Hall behind All Saints Church 2.00 – 4.00pm. New members always welcome 0758 334 3782

November 10th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, Update from Serbia, Phil Shorthouse, for over 50s ring 01634 234712 for details.

November 11th – 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.

November 11th – UpARA, Monthly Meeting Upchurch Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2 for details email Chairman davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

November 11th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, Byron Primary School ME7 5XX, 7.15pm, Life in the Seven Dials - Leslie Allman, Visitors

welcome (small charge) details Val Barrand 07947 583327 email lupusrufus@sky.com or see www.grlhs.weebly.com

November 12th - Annual Craft Fair, 10.00am to 12.30pm, Millennium Centre Rainham (Lower Hall). Range of craft stalls including bakes and preserves, tombola table, Refreshments

November 12th - Winter Wonderland, St Matthew's Church, Wigmore 11.00am – 2.00pm, 50p (children free) meet Father Christmas, Activities, Stalls, Raffle

November 12th – Craft Fair, Smallholders Club, 11.00am – 2.00pm Free entry. Stalls available to rent ring 01634 263408 or email smallholdersclub@btconnect.com

November 12th - Barnardos Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm Twydale Church Hall, Gillingham, Tickets £5 each Tables 6-8, Book in advance, 01634 233405 or 01634 375486, Bring your own Drink and Nibbles

November 12th - Christmas Concert, Bearsted Choral Society with Lees Court Music, 7.30pm, St Margaret's Church, Rainham "A Right Royal Occasion" Tickets £10 (Students £5) from Church Office - 01634 362023 by email tickets@bearstedchoral.org.uk and at the door

November 13th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Brian Gevaux 01634 235883, Sissinghurst Castle NT carpark (£2 non-members) TN17 2AB GR 807384 for a 5 mile figure of eight walk with a break at coffee shop with toilets, undulating walk with flat stretches using short section of road passing through woods, orchards and castle grounds. No Dogs

November 13th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Tony/Ann, 01634 406634, vajra.faulkner@tesco.net Boughton Street Village Hall car park, Boughton Street. ME13 9AH right turn off Bull Lane TR054595 for a 5.5 mile leisurely circular walk finishing 1.00pm approx. Snack stop on route. Pub lunch available at end.

November 13th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am – 2.00pm Get involved at the Country Park by helping with some practical tasks on the site Meet at the Visitor Centre For more details ring 01634 337432

November 14th – Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham meets 2nd Monday 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.

November 14th – Rainham Flower Club, second Monday each month 7.30pm, St Matthews Community Centre,

Wigmore ME8 0NX Demonstration by Julia Knight 'Jack Frost', see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 864572 Visitors welcome.

November 14th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm, Organist - Tony Stace and Andrew Nix, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694

November 15th - GHS Floral Art Group, 7.30pm, United Reformed Church (rear hall Balmoral Road, Gillingham 'Christmas is coming' decorated parcel, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed, details 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

November 15th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.45pm £3.50. Rolf gets Rattled – Rolf Williams. For Walks see: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

November 16th - Wigmore Ladies Club, 2.00pm, Howard Hall, Woodside, We are a cheerful group of ladies and would love you to join us. Just come along or call 01634 388912 for further details.

November 16th - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Village Hall, Hannah Shotton – Talk 'Demelza House' Gift Stall provided, New Members Welcome, Ring 01634 233554 for more details

November 17th - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 - 4.00 pm. Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community Centre, Granary Close, Members Meeting. Visitors welcome small entry charge per visit. 01634 366276 for details.

November 17th - Wigmore Thursday Club, All the Rage, Clothes of the 1920s & 1930s, Lee Ault, (see 10th Nov) November 17th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker Bob Ogley on a Kent theme (see 10th Nov)

November 18th – UpARA, Walk meet Upchurch Village Hall, 10.00am, (see 11th Nov)

November 18th - Hempstara Whist Afternoons, Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead, 1.30pm Start. Players of all abilities are welcome, a partner is not required, for details call Eunice 01634 231664.

November 18th - 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 holder) pre-book 01634 855844

November 18th – Jazz Gig, Paul Booth/ John Horler 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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RAINHAM EVENING W CRAFT FAIR
Saturday 12th November 10.00am - 12.30pm
Millennium Centre, Rainham (Lower Hall)
Refreshments available, All welcome
christine@holder4352.fsnet.co.uk

WINTER WONDERLAND
St Matthew's Church, Wigmore ME8 0NX
Saturday 12th November, 11.00am to 2.00pm
Father Christmas will be in Wigmore to welcome
you in his Grotto!

Plenty of activities and things to stock up on for
Christmas. Entrance 50p (Children Free)

BARNARDOS CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT
Saturday 12th November, 7.30pm start
Twydall Church Hall, Gillingham.
Tickets £5 each with tables of 6 - 8 people.
book in advance, bring your own Drink and Nibbles,
Phone 01634 233405 or 01634 375486

CHRISTMAS CONCERT 'A Right Royal
Occasion' Bearsted Choral Society with Lees Court
Music - Music for the Coronation of King George II
Saturday 12th November, 7.30pm
St Margaret's Church, Rainham, ME8 8AN
Tickets £10 (Students £5) available from
Church Office 01634 362023 at the door or by
email from tickets@bearstedchoral.org.uk

HEMPSTEAD CHRISTMAS FAYRE
Village Hall and All Saints' Church, Hempstead
Saturday, 19th November. 11.30am - 3.30pm
Come and meet Father Christmas, enjoy a light
lunch or delicious home made cake, crafts for the
children and the grand raffle. Free entry for all

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR
St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow
Saturday 19th November, 1.00 - 3.00pm.
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QUIZ NIGHT
Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall
Saturday 19th November, 7.30pm
£5 per person. Bring your own Drinks & Nibbles
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CHRISTMAS FAYRE Deanwood School
Friday, 25th November, 3.15 - 5.30pm
Adults 50p, Children 30p, Pre School - Free
Have your photograph taken with Father Christmas
and find something for all the family, Refreshments
For details of running a stall, please contact
Sam Case at samantha.case@virginmedia.com

"WOLCUM YOLE" Upchurch Choral Society
A concert of Christmas Carols and Songs
St. Mary's Church, Upchurch
Saturday 26th November, 7.30pm
Conductor: Alfred Pickard
Accompanists: Janet Stone and Sue Rossiter
Entry £5, Refreshments

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI
St Matthews Church Community Centre
Drewery Drive, Wigmore ME8 0NX
Sunday 27th November, 5.00pm
A spectacular Christmas treat by Springs Dance
Company, enjoyed by children and adults alike.
Adults £9, over 5 £4, under 5 years - Free
Tickets from Sue on 01634 372508 or
sue.j.warren@hotmail.co.uk


CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT
Bredhurst Woodland Action Group
Thursday 1st December, 7.30pm
St Peter's Church, Hurstwood Road & Green Court
Tickets - £7 pp, u16s free (includes refreshments).
Tickets must be purchased in advance - Not
available on the night. For information and tickets
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CHRISTMAS FAYRE St. Peter's Bredhurst
Bredhurst Village Hall
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR OCTOBER

"I think that I shall never see / A poem lovely as a tree"

From a poem "Trees" by Joyce Kilmer, a (male) American writer 1886 – 1918

The large number of the country's ancient oak trees growing in the grounds of Blenheim Palace, but hidden from public view, were in the news earlier in the year. There was, for example, the Countryfile Programme in late August about the Country Fair at Blenheim. We saw a forester felling an ash tree to give one of the ancient oaks more light and space. The Palace's grounds were designed in the early 18th century by Capability Brown, but he left untouched 120 acres of ancient woodland which was once a royal hunting ground, founded by Henry I in the 11th century, and known as High Park. Recent investigations by a Kew Garden researcher have shown that the park contains at least sixty oaks which are up to 900 years old. These ancient oaks are believed to have seeded naturally and not to have been planted. Some of these oaks were pollarded in the past, which has had the effect of prolonging their lives. Blenheim Palace claims to be the home of the greatest collection of ancient oaks anywhere in Europe. In his book "Meetings with Remarkable Trees", Thomas Pakenham writes about what he says are the two common oaks with the largest girths in Britain and Ireland – and probably Europe. One is at Bowthorpe, near Bourne, in Lincolnshire and the other is at Fredville Park, at Nonington, here in Kent. Both trees have much the same girth (circumference) at 12 metres (40 feet). The Kent oak is taller at 19 metres (62 feet) because it is a maiden tree, that is, it was never pollarded. Accordingly, it has a tall trunk and a substantial crown, albeit that both are getting smaller as time goes by. It is some 500 – 600 years old. The Bowthorpe Oak was pollarded in the past and thus has a short trunk and a small crown. Because of the life-extending effect of the pollarding, the Lincolnshire oak is older at 600 – 1000 years of age. Pakenham wrote that a onetime squire of Bowthorpe used to sit down to dinner in the tree with twenty friends. He

recalled that the six grandchildren of the farmer who currently lives at Bowthorpe showed off the tree to him as if it were a family pet. They stroked it, petted it and climbed it and, in doing so, disturbed a little owl that was snoozing inside the tree. The author felt that the Lincolnshire oak was more like a cave than a tree; a cavern with branches growing from it.

Twenty years ago Pakenham described the Fredville Oak as "still strikingly beautiful" and I was anxious to find out whether this was still the case. I asked Mrs Ennis if she would like to join me in a visit to the Oak but she replied that she was happy enough with seeing some quite impressive oak trees every time she goes up and down the Maidstone Road. It was on my own, therefore, that your Natural History Correspondent headed for East Kent on a sunny October day. The downs between Canterbury and Dover are characterised by sleepy villages, scattered woods, fields of sheep and arable land. It is an area of open skies and little used country lanes. I turned up unannounced at the gatehouse to Fredville Park but there was nobody in. Luckily a local man was working on the adjoining grounds of Nonington Cricket Club and he gave me directions. I was to obtain the permission from the estate's gamekeeper to see the oak. I motored across parkland dotted with sheep and knarled oak and sweet chestnut trees and stopped at a group of cottages outside which immature pheasants were pecking at the ground. It was the gamekeeper's wife who kindly took me to the oak. Surrounded and hidden by other, much younger trees, which shield it from the wind and gales, it is no wonder that the Fredville Oak, with a local name of "Majesty", is so little known. I have not been able to discover when the tree got its name but I shall assume that it was in Victorian times and treat the tree as female. Her main trunk is hollow to the sky. It was as if I was looking up the inside of a ruined, roofless tower. All around the tree, where branches have broken off, there are holes both large and small. Most holes extend through the thin shell of the main trunk, thus giving the appearance of windows in a tall tower. One large branch which has fallen to the ground remains jammed up in the tree and the landowner, John Plumtre, has decreed that it should remain there. After a fairly long

conversation between us, the gamekeeper's wife left me on my own and I spent some time sitting on my portable seat and studying the tree from all angles. I wondered whether Rapunzel would suddenly appear at one of the windows. More seriously, the large branch that fell was the last primary limb; those remaining are of a secondary type. I recalled the words of Paul Cook, Sherwood Forest's Senior Ranger, who once wrote that, "Like people, trees can suffer stress. Unlike people, they can show it by shedding a limb." Majesty has shed a lot of limbs, and I was glad that I had seen her whilst she was still looking majestic, despite her age of between 500 and 600 years. I am sure that Thomas Pakenham, over the Irish Sea, in County Westmeath, would be pleased to know that Majesty remains beautiful, even in her declining years. I shall therefore write to tell him so.

Joe Ennis

RAINHAM CRICKET CLUB: The 2016 Season
For Rainham Cricket Club 2016 turned out to be very memorable not only because the First and Second teams won promotion from their respective divisions in the Shepherd Neame Kent County Cricket League, but also because sufficient finances were raised for the construction of a new community clubhouse at Berengrove Park.

The First XI had a very successful season under the able captaincy of Stuart Chipperfield finishing runners-up in the league. They only suffered three defeats in some closely fought matches. A one wicket defeat against champions Tonbridge proved to be the most disappointing result along with two poor performances against Frindsbury which cost them the championship. However, when the fight for promotion became very tight between four clubs towards the end of the league campaign, a great win at Walmer followed by an undefeated run of games allowed Rainham to finish second in the table.

Rainham Second XI also had a successful season finishing second in their division. Captain Aaron Hawkins led his side by example with 511 league runs and the team headed the table for the first half of the season. After losing several matches towards the end of the league campaign player availability improved and the team finished strongly.

The Third XI which had to rely on a large number of colts struggled to get a team for much of the summer and finished bottom of their division in a

disappointing season which contrasted with 2013 when they finished runners-up in the league.

First XI batsman/wicketkeeper Michael Tyrer came top of the batting averages with 1072 runs and an average of 46.61. Teenager Max Bench also had a great season with the bat scoring 1042 runs with an average of 37.21. Leading club wicket-takers were Ryan Ward with 39 wickets and George Mottram with 36. Teenager Mottram also took 13 catches and 3 run outs to head the club fielding averages.

Although the Under-15 colts' team led by Paul Bench achieved the league and cup double, the other teams failed to win silverware but generally performed well in an important part of the club that continues to flourish. George and Charlie Mottram, Max Bench and Max Wood all had a good season in their respective age groups.

The drive for a new community clubhouse which began in 2001 finally became reality in 2016 when the loans were finalised and sufficient finances raised. A strong committee led by chairman Bill Drew got things moving while Neil McCue played a big part in raising finances. If everything goes to plan it will be completed and ready for the 2017 season.

Overall, the 2016 season turned out to be the best for Rainham Cricket Club in more than a decade and members hope that this will lead to greater success in the future.

David Wood.

The Employment Through Arts (ETA) Project, funded by Natwest, is looking for young adults 17 to 24 who are not in employment or education to take part in a series of creative workshops in Medway focussed on film making, theatre, teamwork and employability skills. In partnership with Strood Community Project, Physical Folk will be delivering the ETA Project until December 2016.

The project will run 2 days a week over 10 weeks in groups of up to 12 people. We are currently running a group at Riverside One Studios, Chatham every Tuesday and Thursday. We are now taking applications for the next course

For further enquiries or to book your free place visit www.physicalfolk.org.uk and click 'Employment through Arts (ETA) Project'. Alternatively, you can contact Lance (Director of Physical Folk) by email eta@physicalfolk.org.uk or phone 0844 660 2787.

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Diary 2016

November 19th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, 9.00am - 12.30pm Free entry, Stalls £10 from carole@cdadsweil.freemove.co.uk or 07779 366054

November 19th - Rainham South Councillor's Surgery Parkwood Youth Centre, 10.00am - 12 noon. No appointment necessary.

November 19th - Hempstead Christmas Fayre, Village Hall and Church, 11.30am - 3.30pm meet Father Christmas in his magical grotto, light lunches. Free entry for all

November 19th - 4th Gillingham (Rainham) Sea Scout Group Christmas Fayre, 10.00am-12noon, Scout Headquarters, Berengrave Lane. Tombola stall, Osborne books, guess the weight of the cake, Help the Heroes, candy floss, refreshments and more. Entry free

November 19th - Quiz Night, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall, 7.30pm, £5 per person, BYO Drinks & Nibbles, details 377671

November 19th - Race Night, Hempstead Village Hall, 7.45pm in aid of Valgrays Border Collie & Animal Rescue, 7.50 per head, bring own nibbles and drink. raffle, cards and cakes tickets 01634 364024, text 07505365019 or penniesfromheaven@virginmedia.com

November 19th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (5th Nov)

November 20th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Roger Norman 01634 232404 07941 965272 Penenden Heath ME14 2DH GR772573 for a 5 mile walk via Boxley Church, Abbey & Sandling village. Undulating possible muddy stretches but minimal road sections 7 Stiles. No Dogs

November 21st - Medway Scabble Club, (see 7th Nov)

November 21st - Wigmore WI meet St Matthews Community Centre, Drewery Drive, 7.30 - 9.30pm. Please contact Chris Ellison 01634 372976 or Barbara Strachan 01634 268611 for more details.

November 22nd - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch Village Hall, 9.30am, Guests £2, (see 11th Nov)

November 24th - Hempstead Leisure Club, RNLI Christmas Sale, games, tea and chat (see 10th Nov)

November 24th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting, (see 10th Nov)

November 24th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside, all welcome, more details 01634 312038.

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Diary 2016

December 3rd - Christmas Fayre, St. Peter's Bredhurst,
 2.00 - 4.00pm, Village Hall, Father Christmas £1.50,
 Children's Activities & all popular stalls, Adults 50p
 Children free
 December 3rd - Concert for Christmas by Medway Youth
 Service, 7.00pm for St. Mary Magdalene Church's Re-
 ordering Appeal. Tickets £5 (£2.50 under 16) include
 refreshments from The Parish Office 01634 853459,
 email: gillinghamparishchurch@gmail.com or Hilda
 01634 932135. Free car parking at Saxon Way School.
 December 4th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10am
 meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 River Valley
 Upchurch Golf Course overflow car park ME9 7AY
 GR838666 for a 3.5 mile Christmas Lunch (must be
 booked in advance) walk via Meresborough, No Dogs
 December 5th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 7th Nov)
 December 5th - Rainham Flower Club, Time to
 Celebrate, (see 14th Nov)
 December 6th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Advent Ring',
 (see 15th Nov)
 December 8th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
 games tea and chat, (see 10th Nov)
 December 8th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Musical
 Entertainment, Kingfisher singers, (see 10th Nov).
 December 9th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group,
 Millennium Centre, Rainham (see 11th Nov)
 December 9th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting (11th Nov)
 December 9th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History
 Society, From Backstage to Front of House - John
 Short, (see 11th Nov)
 December 9th - Charity Christmas Concert, Mantissa
 Opera and Harmony, 7.30pm, St Mary's Island
 Community Centre, Island Way West, ME4 3EP,
 Tickets: £10 (£9 cons) Under 16/students £5 07816
 159668 or tatnall@mantissa.freemove.co.uk
 December 10th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium
 Centre, (see 19th Nov)
 December 10th - The Union of Catholic Mothers, Carol
 Concert featuring The Medway Singers, 7.45pm, St

Augustine's Church, Parkwood, Coffee/tea and mince
 pies served in interval. Tickets Mrs Janet Nastaly 01634
 371897 or Mrs Alma Payne 01634 362896.
 December 10th - Carol Concert, Rainham Ladies Choir,
 Doors open 5.30pm, Gillingham Methodist Church,
 Third Avenue, ME7 2LU, Tickets: Adults £7, under 12
 years £3, 01634 370797 or 01634 613715
 December 11th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
 10.00am, meet Lindsay Floyd & Andy Boorman 07742
 702049 07881 933358 Sutton Valence park with
 consideration in village ME17 3AJ GR814492 for a
 5.25 mile walk. Moderate slopes using field paths. 8
 Stiles. Dogs Allowed
 December 11th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day,
 Riverside Country Park, (see 13th Nov)
 December 12th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard
 Club, Organist - David Harrild, (see 14th Nov)
 December 12th - Rainham Evening Bereavement
 Friendship Group, (see 14th Nov)
 December 13th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society,
 Christmas Festive Meeting and AGM, (see 8th Nov)
 December 14th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
 Christmas at Home, (see 9th Nov)
 December 15th - Rainham Women's Institute, Christmas
 Party, (see 17th Nov)
 December 15th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Christmas tea
 with entertainment by Rhona and David (see 10th Nov)
 December 15th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Carols and
 Readings for Christmas with the children from Fairview
 School, (see 10th Nov)
 December 16th - UpARA, Walk (see 18th Nov)
 December 17th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (5th Nov)
 December 18th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
 10.00am meet Jim Gervaux 07807 896995 Selling
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 for a 6 mile moderate graded walk through Perrywood
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 December 18th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day
 Capstone Farm Country Park, (see 6th Nov)
 December 19th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 7th Nov)
 December 19th - Wigmore WI Christmas Meeting, (see
 21st Nov)

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