

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

DECEMBER 2016
NUMBER 527



We Wish You a Happy Christmas



Edwin Jelly's Clothing Hat and Boot Store was a prominent business in Rainham one hundred years ago. The proprietor Mr Jelly played an active part in the community. As a Director of the Rainham Land Company he was responsible for much of Rainham's development giving his name to Edwin Road. He was also a prime mover in securing the land for Rainham Recreation Ground. See page 3 for John Austins memories of the shop.

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Editorial

Despite strong winds, rain and frost some trees are refusing to release their autumn leaves and when the sun shines we still have quite a spectacular display of orange, yellow and gold in the tree top canopy. No doubt they will soon be on the ground and the fall will be complete. December is here and of course it now only means one thing – Christmas. I do wonder however if we know what we are celebrating. A glance through last years cards when preparing to use them for various craft projects revealed that whilst most of the greetings inside still include Happy or Merry Christmas about a quarter had the catch all phrases 'Seasons Greetings' or 'Warmest Wishes at this Festive Season' ignoring Christmas completely. Only eight had any kind of picture relating to the bible story and of these just one a nativity Crib scene. Many years ago we acquired a miniature set of plastic figures depicting the traditional stable scene including Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, an angel, some shepherds, kings and of course lambs and a donkey which for many years decorated our Christmas cake. Of course the children also mixed in Christmas trees, Father Christmas and his sleigh, holly leaves, robins etc as they covered the rough icing to their satisfaction – it was colourful if not classy! They were the kind of small plastic items that Woolworths did so well. When the first grandchildren came along I gave them to our eldest daughter who uses them in a different way. The boys each have an advent house with a small box for each day in December up to Christmas Day. They put one of the miniature figures or a tiny hanging decoration in each box to 'find' on the appropriate day and so build a nativity scene. Three years ago when the second daughter had a baby I tried to buy her a set of figures. As yet I have been unsuccessful! I must admit I only remember spasmodically and have not made tremendous efforts but the only cake decoration figures I have seen are the cartoon sort and too large, all the Nativity scenes are precast so the figures can't be used individually. Most shops have rows and rows of crackers, tree hangings and decorations but you have to search very hard to find a crib scene. Still it seems that most infant schools do produce a Nativity play each year so perhaps the future generation will have some idea why they receive presents on Christmas Day. If you still need some persuasion to get into the Christmas mood we include details of

several Carol Concerts, a Christmas Tree Festival and Christmas Fayres that may inspire you. Do have a very good month, we wish you a Very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year and will be with you again with our combined January/ February edition in the middle of January.

Correspondence

WINDOW DRESSING at EDWIN JELLY'S
RAINHAM HIGH STREET

Dear Editor

Talking recently to a close friend I confessed I did not like Chinese food, my friend said she did and frequently dined at a particular Chinese venue on the junction of Pudding Road at the lower end of Rainham High Street. I remarked that the restaurant in question was once Jelly's the mens outfitters, nicknamed 'Jelly Belly's', a large shop where I once dressed the double windows for Christmas 1956. At the time I had been recently demobbed from the army where I had been engaged since 1954 throughout the Suez Crisis. As I was teaching part time I jumped at the rare opportunity to earn extra cash.

At the time I was very keen on paper sculpture - and still am - but back then it was difficult to obtain suitable paper and card. On the advice of Mr Ray Hulks the manager and a fellow Toc-H member I took my theme for the windows on what men would like for Christmas – slippers, ties and shirts he suggested. I therefore created several sculptured men each about two foot high with different facial expressions to hold these items.

'Payment John' said Mr Hulks when the windows were completed 'Your choice, a fiver or a raincoat?' I took the raincoat, a military style trench coat which I wore for several years. It went well I recall with my schoolmaster attire when I obtained my first full time art teaching post in 1957, especially when riding my scooter to school.

Sadly much has changed in the High Street, when I was fourteen I worked on Saturdays at Kemsley, the butcher almost opposite Jelly's. Delivering orders on the shop bike wearing a long striped apron all for the princely sum of one pound plus half a pound of sausages. At the time meat along with other food items were still on ration so the sausages were very welcome. Good old Days!

John K. Austin

(still teaching part-time at 82 years old)

KINGFISHER SINGERS CONCERT

Dear Editor

An enormous thank you to everyone who attended the concert in October in St Margaret's Church. It raised £730 for the Brain Tumour Charity. Grateful thanks to all my friends who helped and the Kingfishers who sang beautifully.

Yours sincerely

Olwen O'Dowd

Fundraiser Brain Tumour Charity

WIGMORE VOICES

(formally Wigmore Music & Drama Society - MADS)

Dear Editor

We are seeking a conductor/musical director who is able to provide piano accompaniment at choir rehearsals every Thursday evening 8.00 – 10.00pm at St Matthews Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. Ability to read music and a basic knowledge of theory are essential, however previous experience of leading a choir is not, as long as you are confident with a sense of humour and plenty of enthusiasm. This is a paid position. The choir sing all kinds of music from John Rutter to the Beatles and more! For enquiries and further information please contact: Geoff Down 01634 362506 or Jackie Hopkins 01634 379740

Kind regards

Sue Burrows

PIGEON POST

Even the librarian at Brompton Barracks or the local pigeon fanciers may not know this local detail.

I was once told that a loft somewhere near Bettesscombe Road, Rainham served the military during the war. The lady with the loft had a telephone, unusually in those days. When a pigeon returned to her loft she phoned the military and a dispatch rider arrived pronto.

She never had a bill for her telephone, even long after the war, until she eventually thought she ought to ask about having one. Perhaps one of your readers knows more detail.

Margaret Dunn

CHRISTMAS GROTTO Hempstead Valley

Father Christmas' traditional magical toy shop grotto features many enchanting characters including toy soldiers and will be open daily until Christmas Eve. Entrance to the grotto to visit Father Christmas costs £4.50 per child and includes a wrapped gift.

Pre-book your visit to Father Christmas at www.bookfatherchristmas.co.uk/hempsteadvalley Please note a £1.50 booking fee applies to every booking and you cannot book for the same day you intend to visit.

Children can also hand deliver their letters for Santa and post them in our big red post box and collect their Free personalised reply back from the grotto elves. You must include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your reply to be posted.

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Please allow a week to collect your reply from the grotto elves.

The last posting date is Tuesday 20th December, with last collection on Friday 23rd December.

Santa's wishing well, will once again be raising money for the local Medway branch of Guide Dogs. More information about our Christmas events and grotto opening times can be found at facebook.com/hempsteadvalley and www.hempsteadvalley.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteer Reading Helpers are needed to support children in primary schools across the Medway Towns. If you can spare 3 hours a week to make a lasting difference to children who struggle with their reading please contact Beanstalk on 01622 662 026 or apply via www.beanstalkcharity.org.uk

VOLUNTEER CONSERVATION TASK DAY

Riverside Country Park

Sunday 11th December, 10.00am – 2.00pm

Get involved at the Country Park by helping with some practical tasks on the site

Meet at the Visitor Centre

DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors are needed for:

Hempstead

Wildwood Glade, Black Rock, Stalham, Coppice Ct
Rainham

Henry Street, part Wakeley Road, part Scott Avenue
Parkwood

Culpepper, Beke & Readscoft Roads

Chislet & Brett Walks, Chute, Crispe, Conrad Closes
Upchurch

Forge Lane, Church Farm Road

Lower Halstow

The Street, The Green, Burntwick Drive, School Lane
Cumberland, Westmoreland, Crouch Hill, Vicarage

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or ring 01634 310011 (please mention Action Forum)

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Carol, she could have been family!

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Diary 2016

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: January 3rd 2017

December 3rd - Oast Community Centre, Rainham
Christmas Fundraising Fete 11.00am - 4.00pm

December 3rd - Christmas Fayre, St. Peter's Bredhurst,
2.00 - 4.00pm, Village Hall, Father Christmas £1.50,
Stalls & Children's Activities, Adults 50p Child 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, or
Hilda 01634 932135. Free car parking

December 3rd - 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

December 4th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 River
Valley Upchurch Golf Course overflow car park ME9
7AY GR838666 for a 3.5 mile Christmas Lunch walk
Lunch must be booked in advance, No Dogs

December 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am - 6
miles / 9.7km - Leisuredly (Finish 1.15pm approx.) Meet
and park at Hosey Hill Free Car Park off B2026 on left
when heading from Westerham. TN16 1PJ, TQ453531
circular walk, could be muddy, lunch at Chartwell NT.
Dog friendly Contact Sandy, 07879 417758

December 5th - Medway Scrabble Club, alternate
Mondays, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall,
Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome,
details 01634 230500

December 5th - Rainham Flower Club, second Monday
each month 7.30pm, St Matthews Community Centre,
Wigmore ME8 0NX, Time to Celebrate, For details see
www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 864572
Visitors welcome.

December 6th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed
Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm,
"Advent Ring", New members welcome, first visit free,
no experience needed, for details contact Kaye Buss
01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

December 8th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
games tea and chat, Village Hall behind All Saints
Church 2.00 - 4.00pm. New members always welcome
phone 0758 334 3782

December 8th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's
Community Centre, 2.00pm, Musical Entertainment,
Kingfisher singers, for over 50s ring 01634 234712
December 9th - 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.

December 9th - Hempstara Whist Afternoons, 1.30pm,
The Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead,
Whist Players of all abilities welcome. A partner is not
required. For details call Eunice on 01634 231664.

December 9th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting Upchurch
Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2 for
details email Chairman davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

December 9th - Christmas Fayre, St Margaret's Infant
School, Orchard Street, Rainham, 3.40pm - 5.00pm,
Visit Santa, many games and activities. All proceeds
support children's learning within the school.

December 9th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History
Society, Byron Primary School ME7 5XX, 7.15pm,
From Backstage to Front of House - John Short,
Visitors welcome (small charge) details Val Barrand
07947 583327 email lupusrufus@sky.com or see
www.grlhs.weebly.com

December 9th - Charity Christmas Concert, Mantissa
Opera and Harmony, 7.30pm, St Mary's Island
Community Centre, ME4 3EP, Tickets: £10 (£9 cons)
Under 16/students £5 07816 159668 or 07979 693205
or email tatnall@mantissa.freemove.co.uk

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

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 10th - Wigmore Voices (Formerly known as
Wigmore MADS) Present our Christmas concert 'Sing
a Song of Christmas' 8.00pm, St Matthew's
Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, Tickets
£7, £6 concessions. Box office Sue 01634 370639

December 10th - The Union of Catholic Mothers, Carol
Concert featuring The Medway Singers, 7.45pm, St
Augustine's Church, Parkwood, all proceeds for Junior
Diabetes Research Foundation. Coffee/tea and mince
pies served in interval. Tickets Mrs Janet Nastaly 01634
371897 or Mrs Alma Payne 01634 362896.

December 11th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am - 6.5
miles/10.5 km - Leisuredly (Finishes 1.30pm approx.)
Park considerably in All Saints Close near to
Whitstable Railway Station. CT5 1PL, TR116662 for
linear walk which follows part of the Crab and Winkle
Way from Whitstable to Canterbury returning by
frequent (even on Sundays) bus service. Time for
Christmas shopping in Canterbury at the end. Contact:
07989 753278, graham.jenkinson@blueyonder.co.uk

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 via the Greensand Way Moderate slopes
using field paths. 8 Stiles. Dogs Allowed

December 11th - 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

December 12th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard
Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm,
Organist - David Harrild, details ring Brian Leonard
01634 234694

December 12th - 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.

December 13th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society,
7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Christmas Festive
Meeting and AGM, Members £1, Non members £1.50
All Welcome ring 01634 852519

December 14th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 9.20am - 8
miles/12.9 km - Moderate, Finishes 1.00pm approx.
Meet Mike at Commuter Car Park ME9 0LU,
TQ948574 just north of Bredhurst for a mainly
downhill linear walk to Maidstone. Bring snack, plenty
of cafes and pubs in Maidstone. Returning via 130 bus
from Kings Street (Bus Stop G times: 1.00, 2.25 or
3.55pm) Bring Bus Pass if you have one.

December 14th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Christmas at Home,
for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

December 15th - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 - 4.00
pm. Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community Centre,
Granary Close, Rainham. Christmas Party. Visitors
welcome for small entry charge per visit. Ring
01634 366276 for details.

December 15th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Christmas Tea
with entertainment by Rhona and David (see 8th
Dec) Next meeting January 12th

December 15th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Carols and
Readings for Christmas with the children from Fairview
School, (see 8th Dec).

December 15th - 17th - Christmas Tree Festival, St
Margaret's Church, Rainham, 3.30 - 7.00pm, All
welcome. For details or to display a tree contact the
Church office 01634 362023

December 16th - UpARA, Walk meet Upchurch Village
Hall, 10.00am, (see 9th Dec).

December 17th - Rainham South Councillor's Surgery,
Parkwood Youth Centre 10.00am - 12 noon, No
appointment necessary.

December 17th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (3rd Dec).

December 17th & 20th - You're What? Pregnant? -
A Nativity Play, St Matthew's Church, Wigmore
ME8 0NX 7.30pm. Tickets, free of charge, are available
from 01634 372508 sue.j.warren@hotmail.co.uk Please
note: Admission by pre-booked ticket only

Continued on Page 11

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PTA CHRISTMAS FAYRE
 St Margaret's Infant School, Orchard Street,
 Rainham
 Friday 9th December, 3.40 - 5.00pm
 Come along to our much loved Christmas Fayre and
 visit Santa in his Grotto.
 Have fun on our ever popular chocolate tombola,
 lucky dip, snowball scavenger, decorate your own
 wooden Christmas decoration and many other
 Christmas games stalls! Buy lovely hand-made
 Christmas presents from local Craft Stalls. Enjoy
 yummy homemade cakes and refreshments and take
 part in our exciting raffle prizes including a £75 first
 prize! All proceeds support children's learning
 within the school.

CHARITY CHRISTMAS CONCERT
 Mantissa Opera and Harmony
 Profits to Christmas lunch for the homeless and
 alone Rotary Club of Medway Sunlight Trust Fund
 Christmas Starts Here!
 Friday 9th December, 7.30pm,
 St Mary's Island Community Centre
 Island Way West, ME4 3EP
 Soprano Jennifer Hansen; Mezzo Stephanie Crooks;
 Tenor Alan Rankin Crooks; Baritone Simon Tatnall;
 Repetiteur John Hayden
 Tickets: £10 (£9 conc)(Under 16/students £5)
 Including interval refreshments from:
 Wendy 07816 159668 or Lynne 07979 693205
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 harmonykent@hotmail.co.uk

CRAFT FAIR
 St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham
 Saturday 10th December, 9.00am - 12.30pm
 Free entry, Stalls £10 from
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 or ring 07779 366054

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CAROL CONCERT
 The Union of Catholic Mothers will be hosting a
 Carol Concert featuring The Medway Singers on
 Saturday December 10th at 7.45pm in
 St Augustine's Church, Deanwood Drive, Parkwood,
 Rainham. All proceeds for our charity which this
 year is JDRF (Junior Diabetes Research
 Foundation). Coffee/tea and mince pies will be
 served in the interval. Tickets are available from
 Mrs Janet Nastaly 01634 371897 or Mrs Alma Payne
 on 01634 362896.

WIGMORE VOICES
 (Formally known as Wigmore MADS) Present
 our Christmas concert 'Sing a Song of Christmas'
 on Saturday 10th December at 8.00pm in St Matthew's
 Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore
 Tickets £7, £6 concessions.
 Box office Sue 01634 370639

CAROL CONCERT
 Rainham Ladies Choir
 Saturday 10th December, Doors open 5.30pm
 Gillingham Methodist Church
 Third Avenue, Gillingham ME7 2LU
 MD Simon Tatnall with local Band
 Just In Time.
 Raffle and programmes in aid of
 Making Miracles helping the families of high risk
 pregnancies, premature babies and those who have
 suffered baby loss.
 Tickets: Adults £7, under 12 years £3
 01634 370797 or 01634 613715

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL
 St Margaret's Church, Rainham
 Thursday 15th - Saturday 17th December
 3.30 - 7.00pm
 All welcome
 For details or to display a tree contact the Church
 office 01634 362023

CHRISTMAS at ST MARGARET'S
 Rainham Parish Church
 High Street, Rainham
 December 18th, 6.30pm - Carols by Candlelight
 December 24th, 1.30 & 4.00pm - Crib Services
 Midnight Mass, 11.30pm Carols from 11.00pm
 Christmas Day December 25th, 9.30am
 Family Communion Service

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

This month's notes are about leafy Wigmore in late Autumn and early Winter. The area was once largely covered in woodland owned by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests whose main responsibility was the provision of timber for the building of ships of the Royal Navy. Remnants of that woodland are at East Hoath Wood and Leven Strife behind the library in Fairview Avenue. Individual trees once growing in that woodland can be seen along Maidstone Road and in a number of gardens throughout Wigmore. They are mainly oak, ash, beech, hornbeam, wild cherry and sweet chestnut trees. Certain species of mammals and of birds that once lived in the woodland have adapted to the patchwork quilt of woods, playing fields, houses and gardens that now makes up Wigmore. Those mammals include foxes; they are largely nocturnal, are mostly active at dusk and dawn and, except at the winter breeding season, they lead solitary lives. The typical diet of a suburban fox is likely to include rodents, carrion (including road kills), worms, food left out for them, scavenged pet food and fallen fruit. Foxes have adapted to the built-up landscape by creating their earths under sheds, garages and decking. From early winter onwards, the characteristic, sharp barks of a dog fox can be heard, at night, as he seeks out a mate. The responding screams of a vixen can be a particularly spine chilling sound in the quiet and darkness of a winter's night.

Those mammals also include the grey squirrel which collect and bury sweet chestnuts and acorns in the autumn. They are also very fond of hazel nuts, but many immature specimens are eaten by squirrels in the spring, often leaving few to grow into mature, ripe nuts. Squirrels seem able to remember the rough location of their caches of nuts and then to smell out their exact locations. In December squirrels can be seen in courtship rituals, which include display and chasing; a number of males may be spotted in pursuit of a solitary female. Once the cold winter weather sets in, grey squirrels may spend more time in their strongly constructed dreys than usual, living off their fat reserves, especially in very bad weather, but they

are not able to survive more than a few days without food. They can thus be seen feeding actively in the daylight hours of winter on almost anything edible they can find. Apart from buried nuts, they will search for fungi, flower bulbs in gardens and food on bird tables, for example.

Three of the species of birds that would have been common in the Commissioners' woodland and which have adapted to a suburban setting, include jays, jackdaws and wood pigeons. The jay is a very handsome bird with a recognisable pinkish-brown plumage. It can also be identified by its harsh, grating screech calls. It is a very wary bird and soon takes cover if disturbed. Thus the usual sighting of a jay is of its white rump, as it disappears into cover. The jay is primarily a vegetarian and expends much effort in autumn in collecting and hiding sweet chestnuts and acorns for later consumption. The bird has remarkably good memory for locating the place where it has buried the nuts, even digging through snow to retrieve them. Inevitably, however, a number of nuts are missed and these can eventually grow into new sweet chestnut or oak trees. The jay will often nest in a bush or small tree in a secluded garden.

Jackdaws would have nested in holes in trees in the one-time extensive woodland in the Wigmore area. However, once the bungalows and houses came to be built in the area, from the late 19th century onwards, jackdaws discovered that suitable nesting sites could be found down chimney pots. The birds are irrepressibly jaunty both in the air and on the ground. They pair for life, are intensely social and so live and breed in colonies; there are about twenty birds in the one in the Woodside area of Wigmore.

The wood pigeon's diet is almost entirely vegetarian and includes a variety of wild nuts, fruits and seeds, particularly acorns, beech mast, hazel nuts and holly and ivy berries, which are an indication of the bird's origin as a woodland bird. It was once less common and widespread than it is now. However, over the past two centuries or more, the expansion of arable agriculture created a new food supply that is of particular importance to the bird in winter. This food includes young oil seed rape plants, Brussels sprouts and other brassicas. Today there are some five million

breeding pairs in Britain and it has become, with the rabbit, the arable farmer's main pest. In Wigmore, wood pigeons can be seen foraging in our gardens and their monotonous "coo coo" calls are a familiar sound on warm, summer evenings.

Joe Ennis

RAINHAM at WAR in 1918 (continued from October 2016)

In June residents got a surprise when a military balloon descended over Moor Street and made a forced landing in a field because of ballast problems which caused great local interest. The pilot packed the balloon away with local help then continued his onward journey from Rainham railway station. News also revealed that 1,661 war savings certificates and war bonds had been taken out in June which demonstrated the success of the scheme introduced the previous year. Later, on August 14th the Rainham War Hospital Supply Guild Garden Fete took place at the Parsonage. Mrs Selby, commandant of the 3rd Queen's Regiment opened the event which about 1,500 people attended.

Brothers Ernest and Fred Wellard from Bredhurst Road who served in the Merchant Navy had a narrow escape in September when a German submarine torpedoed their vessel off the west coast of Ireland. They were in the water for 2½ hours before help arrived. Although they were saved 53 other men died. This incident was the third time that they had been torpedoed during the war.

In September William Sellen of the Royal Engineers died in Palestine, Archie Mattocks a sergeant in the Buffs got severely wounded in France while James Keutenius of Station Road perished the day before the war ended when a German submarine torpedoed and sank the minesweeper on which he was serving. Towards the end of the year many Rainham residents fell ill and six deaths were reported when an influenza epidemic struck the area. The Church of England School in Station Road had to close for a week due to the absence of teachers and events in the village were cancelled but attention was temporarily diverted away with news that the war had ended.

The ringing of the church bells and the flying of the Union Jack from St Margaret's church tower finally marked the end of the Great War on November 11th 1918.

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The play explores the theme of refugees, alongside the Biblical Christmas narrative.

Tickets, free of charge, are available from Sue Warren 01634 372508 or sue.j.warren@hotmail.co.uk Please note: Admission by pre-booked ticket only as space is limited.

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Tuesday December 13th, 7.30pm,
Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way
Rainham ME8 0BX
Christmas Festive Meeting and AGM
Members £1, Non members £1.50
All Welcome
For details ring 01634 852519

CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING

Riverside Country Park
Wednesday 21st December, 10.00am – 12noon
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December 18th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am meet Jim Gervaux 07807 896995 Selling
Village car park (next to school) ME13 9RQ GR037565
for a 6 mile moderate graded walk through Perrywood
to Lees Court and Hogben's Hill returning to Selling.
Picnic stop. Pub at end. 4 Stiles, No Dogs

December 18th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am - 7.5
miles/12.1 km - Leisurely Finishes 2.15pm approx.
Meet at Rainham Railway Station ME8 7SF TQ818661
car park on coast bound side of track near footbridge.
(Parking fee will apply) but nearby streets are free on
Sundays. A linear walk utilising public transport to
include non-drivers, those from outside Medway and of
course help the environment. Easy underfoot with good
paths and no muddy tracks to negotiate. At the end, you
can enjoy the festivities if you wish and make your way
back via bus or train at your leisure. Pubs, restaurants,
cafes and shopping opportunities. Contact: Chris, 01634
360270, chris.strachan@live.com

December 18th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day
Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm an
ideal opportunity to learn about the country park's
management and to meet new people. Meet at the
Volunteers block near the Orchard Car Park For more
details ring 01634 338191

December 18th - Christmas at St Margaret's, Rainham
Parish Church, 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight
December 19th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 5th Dec).
December 19th - Wigmore WI Christmas Meeting, St
Matthews Community Centre, Drewery Drive,
Wigmore at 7.30 - 9.30pm. Please contact Chris Ellison
01634 372976 or Barbara Strachan 01634 268611 for
more details.

December 20th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch
Village Hall, 9.30am, Members £1.50, Guests £2, (see
9th Dec).

December 20th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,
Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.45
pm £3.50. Wildlife and Birds of Costa Rica - John
Buckingham. see: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

December 20th - Christmas Wildlife Crafts Riverside
Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon Create your own
festive crafts using different materials Suitable for the
whole family £3 per person, details ring 01634 337432

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December 20th - Rustic Christmas Decoration Capstone
Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon Create a centre
piece for your table or a decoration for your tree
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December 21st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am - 6
miles/9.7 km - Moderate Finishes 1.15pm approx. Meet
Mike at commuter car park ME8 0LU, TQ799629 just
north of Bredhurst. Circular walk along lanes and paths
to Queensdown Warren and Yelsted and return to car
park. Bring snack for midway stop - pub at end.

December 21st - Christmas Wreath Making, Riverside
Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon Take part in this
traditional festive craft using different materials to
construct your own wreath to take home Suitable for
the whole family £3 per child, details 01634 337432

December 21st - Rustic Christmas Presents Capstone
Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon Create a rustic
Christmas present from materials found in the park
Suitable for the whole family £3 per person For more
details ring 01634 338191

December 21st - Wigmore Ladies Club, No meeting this
month. Next meeting will be on 25th January 2017.

December 22nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Informal
Meeting, (see 8th Dec).

December 24th - Christmas at St Margaret's, Rainham
Parish Church, 1.30 & 4.00pm Crib Services

December 24th - Christmas at St Margaret's, Rainham
Parish Church, Midnight Mass, 11.30pm Carols from
11.00pm

December 25th - 9.30am, Christmas Day Family
Communion Service

December 25th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.30am - 2.5
miles/4 km - Easy, Finishes 11.00am approx, meet at
end of Nashenden Farm Lane. ME1 3TQ, TQ733659
Join us for a gentle circular morning stroll to blow away
any cobwebs. This is a very easy Christmas Day walk
circling the Nashenden Valley Nature Reserve. Contact:
Ade, 01634 306405, adeballard@yahoo.co.uk

December 26th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438
Parkwood Shops, Long Catlis Road car park, Rainham
ME8 9PN GR 808642 for a 5 mile Boxing Day Stroll
along country lanes towards Hartlip, No Dogs

December 30th - Hempstara Whist Afternoons, (see 9th
Dec).

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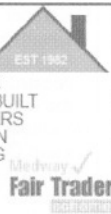
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January 1st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.30am - 4
miles/6.4 km - Leisurely, Finishes 12.45pm approx.
Park at the lower car park near lake off Capstone Road,
ME7 3JG, TQ779653 for a New Year's Day 2017
circular walk around Capstone Farm Country Park. No
stiles, just a few minor hills. The Park covers 114
hectares of former farmland set on the North Downs
with a variety of habitats, many of the woods and
hedgerows are hundreds of years old. Contact: John,
07749 760788, billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk
January 2nd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 5th Dec).
January 5th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Four Days at the
Nursery - A Behind the Shed look at Running a
Traditional Nursery, Jacqueline Aviolet, (see 8th Dec).
January 6th - 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.
January 6th - UpARA, Walk meet Upchurch Village Hall,
10.00am, (see 9th Dec).
January 7th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 3rd Dec).
January 9th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship
Group, (see 12th Dec).
January 9th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,
Organist - Brett Wales, (see 12th Dec).
January 11th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Quiz
Night bring drink and nibbles, (see 14th Dec).
January 12th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Charles &
Emma Darwin and other Downe Dwellers, Barbara
Stevens, (see 8th Dec).
January 13th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting (see 9th Dec).
January 13th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History
Society, Textus Roffensis - Michelle Lees, (see 9th
Dec).
January 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28th February 3rd, & 4th -
Dick Whittington & His Cat by Jack Homewood, A
traditional family pantomime, Oasthouse Theatre,
Rainham, 8pm with matinees every Saturday at 2pm &
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January 16th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 2nd Jan).
January 17th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed
Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm.
Workshop 1 - Basic shape - Symmetrical triangle -
fresh flowers, New members welcome, first visit free,
no experience needed, for details contact Kaye Buss
01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com
January 19th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Therapy Dogs -
Katie & Cookie with Janet & Bob Clarke, (8th Dec).
January 19th - Rainham Women's Institute Speaker
on 'Making Miracles' (see 15th Dec).
January 20th - UpARA, Walk meet Upchurch Village
Hall, 10.00am, (see 9th Dec).
January 21st - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 3rd Dec).
January 24th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch
Village Hall, 9.30am, (see 9th Dec).
January 25th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Lost
Empires, the last days of music hall & variety - Wilf
Lower, (see 14th Dec).
January 26th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Annual General
Meeting, (see 8th Dec).
January 27th - Medway Geographical Society, Holy
Trinity Church, Twydale Lane, ME8 6TN Plenty of
parking available, 7.30 - 9.00pm, 'Land of Ice and Fire:
Iceland' - Tony Mitchell, Everyone welcome, come on
the evening or ring Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

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