

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

JANUARY /

FEBRUARY 2017

NUMBER 528



This 1880 drawing of Bloors Place on the Lower Rainham Road was made by Miss Walter, possibly a daughter of 'Squire Walter' a local magistrate who farmed the 540 acres of Berengrave Farm and lived at Berengrove House with his four daughters, where they were attended by a staff of six (housekeeper, cook, three housemaids and a coachman). A photograph of Bloors Place taken in the 1990s shows little changed between 1880 and 1990 - a fanlight added over the front door, some alterations to the upstairs windows, and replacement of the 'missing' chimney pots. During the Second World War S.W. Fleming lived in the house and a family from New Zealand lodged in the attic. In 1950 a well known television personality Willoughby Gray bought the property and became a popular customer of the Three Mariners. See page 3.

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AF

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Copy Date: Feb 14th, Sm Ads Feb 17th  
Editorial: Barbara Mackay Miller  
Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller  
Action Forum Office  
4 Saracen Close, Gillingham Business Park  
Gillingham ME8 0QN  
Telephone: 01634 310011  
Email: af@thenet.uk.net

## Editorial

A few good frosty mornings are just what is needed to help the natural world. January so far has fully obliged! In recent decades our weather patterns have rocketed from one extreme to the other but lately we seem to have had far more comparatively warm, frost free winters than is our fair share. We need a good cold snap to kill off the bugs and pests and also to kick start the annual cycle of the fruit trees. To date it has been ideal as far as I am concerned. Very cold minus temperatures overnight, sometimes with a snow white covering on the grass and car, but the sun has risen and sufficiently warmed the car windscreen before I need to leave home so no ice scraping has been required. However driving in sunshine at this time of year has its down side, the sun is so low that my car visors do not block out the rays, a slight bend in the road and you are suddenly driving straight into the sun which virtually blinds you. Extreme care is needed but at least everyone is in the same situation so realises why you are creeping along at five miles an hour. I must admit though I am quite relieved when I have to drive any distance if it is a cloudy day. Recently I set off to drive west along the M2 on a sunny day but thought 'That's OK I am driving with the sun behind me' but what I had not factored into the equation was the sun shining straight into my wing mirrors so they were useless - it made overtaking interesting. I had not realised how much I rely on them. It reminded me of the days when wing mirrors were optional extras when you bought a new car and to save costs we either managed without them or purchased only one for the drivers side, as that was all that we considered necessary. Having recently bought a new car the optional extras now seem rather more sophisticated, sat-nav, a special coating to help with car cleaning or fancy boy racer looking wheels but in thirty years perhaps we will also consider these essentials. The RSPB would like your help with their annual Big Garden Birdwatch. Over the weekend of January 28th & 29th you are asked to spare an hour to count the birds you see in your garden (local park or woodland). It is not the total number but how many of each kind are visible at any one time. It is an interesting exercise but I have a very limited knowledge so I am not sure my recording is too accurate - most little brown birds are marked down as sparrows, although I think maybe the sleeker ones that scurry around on the grass are possibly dunnocks. I also do my watching from the

kitchen window as I wash up, so the hour is certainly not continuous. However having experimented one year it made little difference to the overall count whether I watched continuously or broke up the time into sections. To find out more about the Big Garden Birdwatch and the RSPB see [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)  
The days are getting longer - we won't notice much difference for a couple of weeks but by our next issue at the end of February signs of spring should be in the air. Have a very good month, we will see you then.

## Correspondence

RAINHAM EVENING WI at Parkwood

Dear Editor,

As from January 2017 Rainham Evening WI have changed their venue and will now be meeting in St. Paul's Church, Parkwood. We meet every third Monday of the month from 7.30 - 9.30pm with interesting talks, scope to make new friends and learn new skills. We are a friendly group and visits are always welcome. If you think you might like to join us or want to learn more please telephone Kate Archer 01634 360797.

Yours sincerely  
Wendy Surita

FOOTBALL

Dear Editor,

Seeing the local football team article in September 2016 AF, my mind was prompted to look for the Post Card, dated 21st March 1924, previously found among the papers of my late brother Phillip Stanley Manning (1940-2014), who had played both football and cricket for local teams in the 1960s and 1970s. Although the postcard refers to a match well before his time, it is quite possible that he played for this Rainham Football Club. The card which is addressed to Mr R Cassidy, 101 Victoria Street Gillingham, reads: 'Dear Sir, Re match with Hempstead on Sat. All players will meet at the Ash Tree, Gillingham about 2.15pm. Kick off 3.30pm. Yours etc'. In this time of instant communication by phone, text or one of the many social media sites it is difficult to imagine the immensity of the time consuming task a team manager had to assemble his players ninety years ago!

Yours sincerely,  
Peter Manning  
[peter@manningpeter.demon.co.uk](mailto:peter@manningpeter.demon.co.uk)

QUIZ BINGO

Dear Editor

The Inner Wheel Club of Gillingham are having a fund raising Quiz Bingo at Upchurch River Valley Golf Club Restaurant on Friday 24th March 2017 at 6.30pm for 7.00pm sharp. Tables are for 6 persons. Tickets are £10 each and this includes a Chicken & Chips supper. All proceeds are for "Making Miracles".

Tickets are available from 01634 234035 or 07547 250010 or [rosemarie.barnes777@gmail.com](mailto:rosemarie.barnes777@gmail.com)

Yours sincerely  
Rosemary Barnes

## BLOORS PLACE

Bloors Place stands on the Lower Rainham Road, not far from the riverside and Bloors Wharf, which was known in earlier times as Blowers Quay. The quay, and Bloors Place, take their name from the family of le Bloere or le Blore. The house, one of the oldest in Medway, was originally built between 1470 and 1510. Once a simple Wealden hall house, a stone range was added to the rear in the early 16th century, perhaps at the same time as the very large central octagonal chimney was inserted. These improvements were probably made when Christopher Bloor lived there. According to Hasted, Christopher Bloor, who had bought the Manor of Sileham from Sir Antony St Leger, 'rebuilt his seat in this parish...in which his ancestors had resided for several generations'. The house was surrounded by walls with defensive apertures known as gun loops, and also special niches, bee boles, to hold the straw skeps where the bees were kept.

Like most old houses, Bloors Place has been frequently altered and extended. In 1710 the front was refurbished. The building was damaged by a fire in the eighteenth century and 'A great part of the old mansion was pulled down circa 1798 or earlier to adapt the size of it to that of a farmhouse, though what still remains of it, with the garden walls, offices, and so on show it to have been of large size, well suited to the hospitality of those times, and to the rank which the founder of it, Christopher Bloor, esq., held among the gentry of the county'. [Kent on line - Parish Clerk.] The house came indirectly into the ownership of the Tuftons, Earls of Thanet, through Bloor's daughter, Olympia. The Tufton surname is commemorated by monuments to two descendants in St Margaret's Church at Rainham: the chapel at the end of the north aisle (officially St John's Chapel) is often called 'The Tufton Chapel'. An 1851 survey of Sir Richard Tufton's Bloors Place estate describes the house, rooms and all the outbuildings in some detail. It then goes on to make comments on the fields (there were 447 acres of arable, pasture and orchard), and records that the tenant, William Smart, was highly respectable and from the appearance of his farm, stock, etc. a man of substantial property (Holley).

From 1891 a Scotsman named James Stewart had been running the farm, and in 1920 he bought the whole estate for £25,000. It has changed hands several times since then - when last sold the price was nearly thirty

times that sum. According to some recent sale particulars 'The property still boasts a wealth of character features including a heavily timbered interior with feature crown posts and 16th century moulded stone mullion windows to the rear, panelled drawing room and a first floor landing with detail enriched spandrels and moulded stops above the doorway'. The agent at an earlier sale also mentioned 'the delightful wall paintings of fairy tale scenes from the 1950s in one of the bedrooms.'

Since then new owners have partly modernised the interior, putting in another staircase, reordering the kitchen and converting an outbuilding to a utility room for example, but any such alterations to a listed building have to be done following detailed planning consultation. Currently planning permission is being sought for exterior changes such as replacing a flat roof with a pitched roof more in keeping with the original house, and also adding a second dormer window at the front.

RAD

## RAINHAM MINI EAGLES

Football Training for boys and girls  
Wednesday - term time only at Rainham School for Girls 5.00 - 6.00pm, YR & Y1  
Saturday mornings at Esabs field in Cornwallis Avenue Gillingham, football training for Y1s starting from 21st January at 10.00 - 11.00am, this is in readiness for the Sunday league in September 2017. For further details contact Sarah McGregor 07810 823849 or see our Facebook page.

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**Hempstead** Wildwood Glade, Black Rock, area  
**Rainham** Henry St, part Wakeley Rd & Scott Ave  
**Upchurch** Forge Lane, Church Farm Road  
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Carol, she could have been family!*

# Diary 2017

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: February 14th 2017

January 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28th February 3rd, & 4th -  
Dick Whittington & His Cat by Jack Homewood, A  
traditional family pantomime, Oasthouse Theatre,  
Rainham, 8.00pm with matinees every Saturday  
2.00pm & 5.00pm. Box Office 0844 8793224 or on-line  
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

January 15th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am meet Roger Norman 01634 232404  
07941965272 Gore Court Cricket Ground A2 near Key  
Street ME10 1PR GR 887642 for 4.5 mile walk around  
Borden Nature Reserve & Village. Contains minor  
slopes with some road, field and grass walking. One  
stile 4 steps. No toilets available. No Dogs

January 15th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am for a  
6.5 miles/10.5 km - moderate circular walk, finishes  
1.30pm approx. Meet Community Centre Car Park -  
Paddlesworth Road, Snodland ME65DP TQ694620  
Bring picnic lunch, lovely view from the top of Holly  
Hill for picnic. From here we will see the memorial  
cross to Squadron Leader Tommy Pinkham RAF - a  
Spitfire pilot who was shot down on 5th September  
1940. Ade, 01634 306405, adeballard@yahoo.co.uk

January 16th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St  
Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new  
members welcome, details 01634 230500

January 16th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St.  
Paul's Church, Parkwood 7.30pm. Speaker John  
Llewelyn Jones "Pearls" All welcome, ring Kate Archer  
01634 360797 or just come along.

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January 17th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,  
Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30 - 9.45pm, £3.50.  
Tales from Concrete Jungles - David Lindo, For Field  
Trips: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

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, St Matthew's  
Community Centre, 2.00pm, Therapy Dogs - Katie &  
Cookie with Janet & Bob Clarke, for over 50s ring  
01634 234712 for details.

January 19th - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45pm -  
4.00pm. Speaker on 'Making Miracles' Wakeley Hall,  
Oast House Community Centre, Granary Close,  
Rainham. Visitors welcome for small entry charge per  
visit. Ring 01634 366276 for details.

January 19th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker from the  
Oliver Fisher Baby Unit. Village Hall behind All Saints  
Church, 2.00 - 4.00pm. New members always welcome,  
phone 07583 343782

January 20th - 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 20th - UpARA, Walk meet Upchurch Village  
Hall, 10.00am, For details email Chairman David  
Powell davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

January 20th - Hempstara Whist Afternoon, 1.30pm start,  
The Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Whist players of  
all abilities welcome, A partner is not required. For  
details please phone Eunice 01634 231664.

January 21st - Rainham South meet your local Councillor  
3:16 Cafe Parkwood, 10.00am - 12noon, No  
appointment necessary

January 21st - 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

January 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am for a  
6.2 miles/10 km - moderate circular walk finishes  
1.30pm approx. Meet at Trosley Country Park - Pay  
and Display DA13 0SG, TQ632610 A circular walk  
from Trosley Country Park via North Downs Way  
Pilgrims Way, Cleggett's Farm, Coldrum Long Barrow  
and Trosley Court. Bring Picnic lunch. Contact: Tony/  
Ann, 01634 406634, vajra.faulkner@tesco.net

January 22nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, meet John Williams 01622 764821 07977  
614033, Hothfield Common car park off A20 TN26  
1HD GR 971459 for a 6.5 mile undulating walk with 1  
mile of road walking. May be muddy if wet. 2 stiles. No  
toilets Dogs allowed

January 24th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch  
Village Hall, 9.30am, Members £1.50, Guests £2, (see  
20th Jan).

January 25th - Wigmore Ladies Club, 2.00pm, Howard  
Hall, Woodside, a cheerful group of ladies would love  
you to join us. Just come along or call 01634 388912.

January 25th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,  
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Lost Empires, the last  
days of music hall & variety - Wilf Lower, for details  
contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

January 26th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board  
games, tea and chat (see 19th Jan).

January 26th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Annual General  
Meeting, (see 19th Jan).

January 26th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and  
Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, AGM, Howard Memorial  
Hall, Woodside, All welcome, more details from Sylvia  
Wildridge 01634 312038

January 27th - Medway Geographical Society, Holy  
Trinity Church, Twydall 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

January 29th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am meet David Brown 07815 106791 Camer Park  
car park DA13 0XT GR 651670, for a 4.75 miles  
undulating slightly hilly walk using roads, fields and  
grassland. 1 stile and some steps. May be muddy if wet.  
Toilets and refreshments in park, No Dogs

January 29th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am for a  
5.5 miles/8.9 km - Leisurely circular walk finishes  
1.00pm approx. Meet at the Station in Charing TN27  
0HZ, TQ950491 Walk through fields to Charing Heath  
and Cherry Farm back via Church Hill, Heath Farm,  
Hurst Wood and Newlands Farm. Bring Picnic lunch.  
We pass through the old Charing Heath common land,  
ancient woodlands, Springwood Sand quarries which  
reveal the Greensand Belt, Tile Lodge Farm where tiles  
were once made and Burleigh Chapel (Which never  
existed!) Contact: Tony/Ann, 01634 406634,  
vajra.faulkner@tesco.net

January 30th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 16th Jan).

February 2nd - Hempstead Leisure Club, Recycling  
speaker from Medway Council (see Jan 19th).

February 3rd - 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.

February 3rd - UpARA, Walk meet Upchurch Village  
Hall, 10.00am, (see 20th Jan).

February 3rd - Hempstara Whist Afternoons, 1.30pm,  
Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, all abilities welcome.  
Partner not required, details Eunice 01634 231664

February 4th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 21st Jan).

February 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am meet Jim Gevaux 07807 896995 Selling  
Village car park (free) next to school ME13 9RQ GR  
037565 for a 6 mile moderate walk through Perry  
Wood to Lees Court and Hogben's Hill returning to  
Selling. Picnic Stop, pub at end, 4 stiles, no dogs

February 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk 10.00am - 7.5  
miles/12.1 km - Leisurely finishes 2.15pm approx. Park  
and meet at Wingham Car Park St Mary's Meadows,  
(Public Toilets available) CT3 1DF, TR244574  
Wingham and four water mills - a circular walk with a  
couple of gentle slopes. Bring a picnic if you wish or  
there are pubs at end. A nice flattish walk through  
woods, fields, meadows and lanes passing four  
watermills, three of which are described as corn mills  
the other a flour mill. Contact: Len, 01634 319391,  
lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk

February 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, Oast House  
Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm, Dig for Victory  
- Russell Bowes, New members welcome, details from  
01634 366276

Continued on Page 11

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NCP are looking for a pianist as our loyal member Pauline is retiring. We do two main shows a year plus several venues within the community, i.e residential homes, WI's etc. We meet on a Tuesday evening at Newington Village Hall 7.30 - 10.00pm. We are a very friendly group so if you feel you can tinkle the ivories for us, please do come along, or ring Derek Friday 01795 873056 to have a chat.

**DICK WHITTINGTON & HIS CAT**  
by Jack Homewood  
A traditional family pantomime  
January 13.14.20.21.27.28 & February 3.4  
Performances at 8.00pm with matinees every  
Saturday at 2.00pm & 5.00pm.  
This classic fairy tale is brought to life by the Rainham Theatrical Society. Will Dick find his fame and fortune in London or will his plans be thwarted by the evil Queen Rat. Will Sarah the Cook and Idle Jack help save the day?

To find out you'll have to come along to the Oasthouse Theatre for an evening full of music, laughter and plenty of audience participation!  
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**TITTER YE NOT** by Paul Harris  
A play about the life of Frankie Howerd  
Friday 9th February 2017  
Oasthouse theatre, Rainham. Curtain up at 8.00pm.  
In 2017 the great comedian Frankie Howerd would have been 100 years old!  
To mark this centenary Paul Harris (comedian, writer and former BBC Radio Kent presenter) will be touring in his one man show.  
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Land of Ice and Fire: Iceland - Tony Mitchell.  
Friday February 24th, 7.30 — 9.00pm  
A New Zealand Adventure - Lorna Bailey  
Friday March 24th, 7.30 — 9.00pm  
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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR DECEMBER

In December I visited two neighbouring parishes, on the north Kent grazing marshes, between Sittingbourne and Faversham. They were Oare and Luddenham. The two parishes are different in character and I visited them for largely different reasons. I travelled along Watling Street and turned left for Oare just before Ospringe. Oare Creek is home to yachts and other boats, almost all laid up during Winter, and the village thus has a nautical air about it. I motored down Hartly Ferry Road and stopped at the car park of Oare Marshes Nature Reserve, which is managed by Kent Wildlife Trust. I climbed onto the embankment overlooking The Swale and the site of the former Hartly Ferry. During a visit I made there in the Summer, I ate my sandwiches in the sunshine, watching the clouds and the Thames sailing barge Greta glide silently and slowly by. On the day of my December visit there was a bitterly cold wind blowing and my plan was to take lunch in The Three Mariners at Oare. I came to the reserve in order to have my first sight of the ducks and waders from the Northern Hemisphere and elsewhere that spend their Winter months there.

I set off along the embankment in the direction of Whitstable with the aim of walking round the perimeter of the reserve. The muddy water of The Swale was topped by small white waves which were whipped up by the wind. The reserve consists of grazing marsh, open water "scrapes" and dykes of fresh and brackish water. Konic horses, with their backs to the wind, were feeding there. Their grazing leaves areas of tussocky grass which are ideal sites for ground nesting birds like redshanks and yellow wagtails. At the junction between The Swale and Faversham Creek I headed up the creek. In the distance I could see the tall, thin spire of Faversham Church and the chimney of Shepherd Neame's brewery. In due course I turned inland and came to the main hide overlooking the "scrapes". The birds in view were either in the water and sheltering from the wind behind reed covered islands or, if on land and in the open, standing with their heads facing into the

wind. They included ducks such as pintail, shoveller, tufted duck and widgeon. There were also waders such as dunlin, knot, black tailed godwit and lapwing. I finally arrived back on Hartly Ferry Road down which I headed towards the car park. From the road I had another view of the birds on the "scrapes"; separated from the road by a sturdy fence, they feel safe from pedestrians and bird watchers using their cars as hides. Sailing and bird watching bring many people to Oare but visitors would be very much thinner on the ground at my next port of call.

After a hearty lunch I left Oare and drove through Bysing Wood, which is situated on a ridge overlooking Luddenham Marshes. I turned down a steep, hollow lane which leads onto the marshes. Erosion of the banks of the lane had exposed the roots of oak and coppiced sweet chestnut trees growing in the wood above. I, for one, would not want to walk up or down that ancient lane on a dark, windy night. There is no village in the parish of Luddenham, just three hamlets and a few scattered farm houses and cottages. The population is less than 200. The largest hamlet is Luddenham Court, which consists of a manor house, a farm and a church. Ignoring modern barns which house beef cattle in winter, the age of the buildings at the Court range from the mid 12th century to the early 19th century. They overlook almost 900 acres of marshes, the fields on which are of various shapes and sizes. Their boundaries are mostly in the form of natural watercourses or man-made ditches which both drain the marshes and contain livestock. The grazing and arable land was created, from medieval times onwards, from what were once salt marshes and estuary mud, by the building of embankments which kept out the sea.

The Stevens family has farmed this ancient landscape since the late 19th century when Ashley Stevens bought the Court. He was a noted sheep breeder who also grew hops, fruit, wheat and root crops. His granddaughter now runs the farm and rears beef cattle, sheep and pigs along traditional lines. There is a butcher's shop on the farm, a visit to which was the main purpose, on this occasion, of my coming to the Court. I did however take the opportunity of having a walk around the farm. I came across a flock of house

sparrows feeding on the seeds of hay in the cattle barns. I noted a flock of lapwing wheeling over the marshes. They may have been disturbed by a raptor, perhaps a peregrine. A farm employee told me that barn owls continue to nest in a recess in the east gable end of the 12th century church. The birds can sometimes be seen in the early mornings, as can a little owl. Regular services are no longer held at the church but it remains consecrated and is in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust. Happily, the primary school, much extended, is still open. It sits, surrounded by fields, in close proximity to The Old School House, The Old Rectory and an old VR red-painted letter box. It was saved by its good reputation and by its close proximity, by car, to Davington and Faversham.

Joe Ennis

## RAINHAM AT WAR in 1917

With a British naval blockade in progress the Germans retaliated with unrestricted submarine warfare to starve Britain out of the war. Meanwhile, as in the previous two years the war effort in Rainham continued with fund raising and war related activities along with news of casualties from the battle front. The year began with heavy snow as Mrs Perry of Rainham Congregational Church entertained soldiers billeted in Rainham in the church school. Later in February the formation of the Food Production Society took place in an effort to utilize available ground in the parish for food production. George Quinell from Broad Walk chaired the society that wanted to cultivate every available piece of land. The parish council wanted four acres of land to cultivate and later in the year they purchased a potato sprayer and six cases of chemical spray in preparation for this. Boys of the Church of England School in Station Road enrolled for National Service to assist with digging gardens for widows and wives of servicemen whose husbands were fighting in the war. Mr Wilson who worked as a master at the school gave advice to people about how to plant seeds and potatoes while a lecture given by Mr W A Millard from the Agricultural Department of Leeds University about planting took place in the Church Hall. The Kent Fortress Royal Engineers stationed in Hartlip organised a whist drive and dance at the Council School to raise money on behalf of St Bart's Hospital while a war savings meeting took place in the

church hall to form a war savings association. This led to other associations being formed in different parts of the parish. Rainham Congregational Church had one of the most successful associations with 26 members. The annual Empire Day celebrations in May helped raise nationalistic pride as people assembled in the playground of the Church of England School in Station Road while pupils and teachers paraded in front of them. The Union Jack flew from the church tower. Reverend Tamplin began with prayers, the Union Jack saluted and a verse from the National Anthem sung. Certificates were then distributed to pupils. Mrs Webster presented these to the boys, Miss Walter to the girls and Mrs Wakeley to the infants. After this cheers were given for the empire, the Queen, the Royal Family, soldiers, sailors and airmen. June began with the Food Economy Exhibition at the Council School organised by Mr Mattocks and opened by Lady Callaghan, wife of Admiral Superintendent at the Nore. Money raised from the exhibition was donated to Fort Pitt Hospital in Chatham. Money raising continued in July with a Bandage Day in aid of the War Hospital Supply Guild and the well-attended event raised £4/10/0d.

Throughout the year regular news arrived about fatalities and casualties at the battle front. In January Joseph Drain aged 24 of Layfield Road, Gillingham died in action. He had previously lived in Station Road Rainham where his parents owned a greengrocer's shop and had attended the National School in Station Road. Better news revealed that Sergeant-Major Raynor Swan aged 27 and formerly of Ivy Street had been mentioned in despatches for his bravery. Six years before the war he travelled to Australia and joined the army in 1914. He had fought in Gallipoli and Egypt and had been wounded in the head and poisoned by barbed wire. After Gallipoli he went to France where he became a sergeant-major. Sir Douglas Haig mentioned him in despatches for bravery on the battlefield.

David Wood

## LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Gillingham and Rainham.

Byron Primary School, Gillingham, ME7 5XX  
Friday 13th January, Textus Roffensis - Michelle Lees  
Friday 10th February, History of Colour - Toni Mount  
Friday 10th March, Pocahontas - Christopher Bull  
7.15pm start, Visitors welcome for a small charge  
Details please contact Val Barrand 07947 583327

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## Diary 2017

February 8th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, A Kick  
up the Sixties - Alan Haines, (see 25th Jan).

February 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Collection of  
annual subscriptions, (see 19th Jan).

February 9th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board  
games, tea and chat (see 19th Jan).

February 9th - Oasthouse Theatre, Rainham, 'Titter Ye  
Not' by Paul Harris, A play about the life of Frankie  
Howerd. Curtain up at 8.00pm. Box Office on 0844  
8793224 or on-line [www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk)

February 10th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting Upchurch  
Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2 (see  
20th Jan).

February 10th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History  
Society, Byron Primary School ME7 5XX, 7.15pm,  
History of Colour - Toni Mount, Visitors welcome  
(small charge) details Val Barrand 07947 583327 email  
[lupusrufus@sky.com](mailto:lupusrufus@sky.com) or see [www.grlhs.weebly.com](http://www.grlhs.weebly.com)

February 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 5.5  
miles/8.9 km - Leisurely Circular walk finishes 1.00pm  
approx. Park on the Leas (nearest Post Code: ME12  
2NL TQ949741 - then meet on the grass, on seafront.

Circular walk follows coastal path towards Cliff then  
inland. No stiles and only gentle inclines. Bring picnic  
lunch (pub at end available). Contact: John/Lesley,  
7801537317, [lesley.fielding43@gmail.com](mailto:lesley.fielding43@gmail.com)

February 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 11.5  
miles/18.5 km - Moderate Circular walk ends 4.15pm  
approx. Meet in old council car park, Strood by river.  
(parking fee) ME2 4AB TQ738690 Walk to M2 Bridge  
back through Wouldham returning to Strood. Bring  
picnic lunch for midway break. Contact: Derek, 07768  
448633, [derek.kent@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:derek.kent@blueyonder.co.uk)

February 12th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am meet Patricia Daniels 07960 295164 (text  
only) Chatham Waterfront Bus Station stop 10, ME4  
4SL GR 757682 for a 5 mile Chatham & Rochester  
town walk via Borstal & Rochester using roads,  
riverside walk, parks, alleyways, backstreets. Almost no  
mud but undulating with steep slopes, no dogs.

February 13th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard  
Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8  
9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Ian House, details ring Brian  
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February 13th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 16th Jan).

February 13th - 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.

February 14th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society,  
7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, ME8  
0BX 'The Hop Bine and Hop Picking in Kent' - Chris  
Stewart Members £1, Non-members £1.50, visitors and  
new members always welcome, details 01634 852519

February 16th - Rainham Women's Institute. Speaker  
on 'Kentish Life in Victorian Times' (see 19th Jan).

February 16th - Wigmore Thursday Club, History of  
Women's Ministry, Anne Bennett, (see 19th Jan).

February 16th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker John  
Preston "Local Industry" with slides (see 19th Jan).

February 17th - UpARA, Walk meet Upchurch Village  
Hall, 10.00am, (see 20th Jan).

February 17th - Hempstead Whist Afternoons, (3rd Feb)  
February 18th - Rainham South meet local Councillor  
3:16 Cafe Parkwood, 10.00am - 12noon, No  
appointment necessary.

February 18th - Family Friendly Bingo Evening, Friends  
of St Margaret's Church, Millennium Centre, Rainham  
6.00pm start, Tickets £3 including one book of 8 games  
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February 18th - 50p Sale, 2.00pm, St Augustine's Church  
Hall, Rock Avenue, Gillingham, Books, DVD's, CD's  
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February 18th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (21st Jan).

February 19th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, meet John Williams 01622 764821 07977  
614033 Suffolk Way, Sevenoaks Buckhurst No 2 car  
park TN13 1LW GR 533547 for a 5.5 mile hilly walk.

No stiles but 10 steps, Dogs allowed  
February 19th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am - 5.5  
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school TN18 4HG, TQ763305 Several stiles. Bring  
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February 20th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute,  
Birthday Party, (see 16th Jan).

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## Diary 2017

February 21st - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Wildlife of Madagascar, an introduction and more - John Young, (see 17th Jan).  
 February 21st - GHS Floral Art Group, "Pancake Day" - an exhibit (space: width 61cm, height 91cm, depth 65cm), (see 17th Jan).  
 February 22nd - All Saints Women's Fellowship, A Trip Down Memory Lane - The Committee, (see 25th Jan).  
 February 23rd - Hempstead Leisure Club 'Elastix' exercise with Sue (see 19th Jan).  
 February 23rd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting, (see 19th Jan).  
 February 23rd - Rainham & District Dolls' House and Miniaturist Group, (see 26th Jan).  
 February 24th - Medway Geographical Society, 'A New Zealand Adventure' - Lorna Bailey, (see 27th Jan).  
 February 26th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Andy Boorman 07881 933358 Seasalter Joy Lane, park near Rose in Bloom PH CT5 4DD GR 098655 for a 5 mile circular "Walk with Turner" ramble using unmade roads, footbridge over railway & marshland with 3 hills. Expect 4 stiles, Dogs allowed  
 February 26th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am - 6 miles/9.7 km - Leisurely circular walk finishes 1.15pm approx. Meet at the Bull Inn, High Street, Brenchley a small car park near the pub (with toilets) more parking near church. TN12 7BD, TQ676425 Through orchard, fields and quiet lanes, one short climb near the end and a couple of easy manageable slopes. Bring picnic or pubs at end. Walk through disused golf course, visit Furnace Pond, the water powered one of the largest iron works in the Weald employing 200 men. Contact Len, 01634 319391, lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk  
 February 27th - Medway Scramble Club, (see 16th Jan).  
 February 28th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch Village Hall, 9.30am, Members £1.50, Guests £2, (see 20th Jan).  
 March 2nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Royal Visits to Kent, Colin Breed, (see 19th Jan).

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March 3rd - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, (see 3rd Feb).  
 March 3rd - Women's World Day of Prayer, 2.00pm, St Margaret's Church, High Street, Rainham, Service written by the Christian women of the Philippines with a theme of 'Am I Being Unfair to You?' For more information please see the website www.wwdp.org.uk  
 March 4th - Bloodwise Charity Quiz, 7.30pm, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, Tickets £5 - Teams of 6, To Book a Table ring Dot 01634 864642  
 March 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Brian Gevaux 01634 235883, Lower Halstow, Lapwing Drive ME9 7DZ GR 098655 for a 5 mile mainly flat walk across fields on a figure of eight to Newington. Could be muddy. 1 Stile, Dogs allowed  
 March 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.15am, 9.5 miles/15.3 km - moderate circular walk finishes 3.30pm approx. Sevenoaks meet in Kemsing Car Park nearly opposite the Bell Public House - free parking and toilets available TN15 6PP TQ555585 A circular walk via North Downs Way towards Wrotham, across Woodlands Golf Course. Picnic lunch will be at the Rising Sun, Cotsman Ash (no food available) only hot and cold drinks. From here we continue to Romney Street through field and woods returning back to Kemsing. Contact: Del, 01322 525296  
 March 7th - GHS Floral Art Group, "St Patrick's Day" - petite and miniature arrangements (fresh/dried), (see 17th Jan)  
 March 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, Commercial Rose Growing - Peter Cox, (see 7th Feb).  
 March 8th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Fund Raising, (see 25th Jan).  
 March 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Another visit from Mel Rees, (see 19th Jan).  
 March 10th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, Pocahontas - Christopher Bull, (see 10th Feb).  
 March 13th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm, Organist - Matthew Bason, details Brian Leonard 01634 234694  
 March 13th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship (see 13th Feb)

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