

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

MARCH 2017
NUMBER 529



Locomotive No 73088, one of twelve BR Standard 4-6-0 engines built in the 1950s which from 1955 to 1959 pulled express trains serving the Kent Coast, in front of Wakeley's Oasthouse which was converted to a Community Centre in the early 1970s. See page 3

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Editorial

When the sun is shining, despite it still only being February, it really feels that spring is in the air. If I get outside and feel the mild breeze and gentle sun on my face then I certainly feel a whole lot better and no matter what is going on in the News headlines I can believe that 'all's right with the world'. An illusion no doubt but a good feeling that can improve my mood for the whole day. Walking is good - it need not be at race speed - even a gentle stroll rejuvenates your body. The nanny state recommends that we take at least 30 minutes of exercise a day. It doesn't sound much but if you are timing it thirty minutes can seem very long time. However if I have a purpose in mind, usually for me a walk to get the daily paper, it combines the two activities and I have a very satisfying feeling of wellbeing (and rosy cheeks) while I reward myself with a cup of tea when I return.

My walk often takes me half a mile up our very narrow country lane to the Moto Service Station. I collect the litter as I go. During the last week I have amassed a total of eleven large carrier bags full. Much is easily recyclable drink cans, plastic or glass bottles, cigarette packets and the occasional newspaper but crisp packets, take away food cartons and also the odd car part also feature. Admittedly this is the time of year to find most litter, the undergrowth has died back to a minimum and the bushes are bare of leaves so long buried items creep to the surface. Often a newly dropped brightly coloured sweet wrapper or cola can attract me to a spot and I then discover a cache of several other items nearby cunningly disguised in the undergrowth. It is sensible therefore to capitalise on the success of the 'Clean for the Queen' campaign in Spring 2016 again at this time of year. So we have the 'Great British Spring Clean'. Over the weekend of 3rd - 5th March (or at some other time in the month if that is not convenient) it is hoped 'to bring together people from across the country to clear up the litter that blights our towns, villages, countryside and coastline'. Large high profile group clean ups will be organised but it is equally useful if you undertake to clear a small area near where you live. To find out more and to register a group activity see the website www.greatbritishspringclean.org.uk I am delighted to announce that once again we are able to donate the money we save by the generous help of our volunteer distributors of Action Forum to three organisations. £2000 will go to each of the following:

St Margaret's Church, Rainham; the Parish of South Gillingham and the charity 'Tools for a Mission' (who refurbish and then donate unwanted tools and sewing machines to Africa) to use as they think most useful at this time. This brings the total we have given away since we returned to volunteer distribution in September 2000 to £55,550. Thank you very much to all who help each month, it is much appreciated by those who receive Action Forum through their letterbox and has the added bonus of giving a really great contribution to charity. Enjoy the spring air, relish in the sunny days (when we have them) and we will be with you again in April. Have a good month.

Correspondence

BREDHURST & DISTRICT WORKING MEN'S CLUB AND INSTITUTE

Dear Editor,

I would be interested to know if any readers have recollections or knowledge of the Bredhurst and District Working Men's Club and Institute circa 1939 when the Secretary was M Akhurst.

Yours sincerely
Barrie Peters

Email barrie.peters@icloud.com

SUPPORT THE HARROW, STOCKBURY
Dear Editor,

Please help us raise awareness of our Support The Harrow campaign! Pubs up and down the country are closing at an alarming rate and our local pub, The Harrow, Stockbury, is the latest victim. Since having the pub listed as an Asset of Community Value in 2016 we have been toiling hard to purchase our pub from Shepherd Neame. Our deadline is March 31st to raise the £310,000 needed! So far we have had excellent support from the local community and have raised half this amount and have over 90 investors. This is the last Public House in the village and is over 200 years old. What a shame it would be to lose such a piece of village history!

We would like to thank everyone who has joined the Support The Harrow movement so far and ask anyone else interested in helping to email stockburypub@gmail.com

Yours sincerely
Jamie Stone (Pub Campaigner)

CHOIR CONCERT

Dear Editor

The Parish of South Gillingham will be holding a concert performed by Kent Police Male Voice Choir on Saturday March 25th at 7.30pm in St. Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. It will be a programme of light music including traditional male voice choir songs, spirituals and songs from musicals. Tickets are £10 including light refreshments and are available from Wendy Keast 01634 230325.

Yours sincerely
Wendy Keast

'LADIES - DO STRONG VIRILE MEN INTEREST YOU?'

This was a heading in Action Forum in May 1973, to promote interest in the forthcoming 'Rainham Spectacular', whose many attractions included 'A whole afternoon's open Tug of War competition under A.A.A. laws for the Evening Post Cup.'

The first Rainham Spectacular had taken place the previous year, with the aim of raising funds for converting the oasthouse by Rainham Station into a new Community and Youth Centre. Similar events were held in Cozenton Park each year throughout the 1970s. The programme for 1973 included naval gun teams, sky divers, miniature train rides, a dog show, a steam organ, a gymnastic display, vintage cars and a traction engine as well as stalls and sideshows run by more than fifty local organisations. Music and refreshments were available throughout the afternoon, of course. All this for the princely sum of 15p, or 10p if tickets were bought in advance. Children under ten entered free if accompanied by an adult. The weather cooperated, with blazing sunshine all day, and it was estimated that the numbers attending were 'nearly 20,000' (as reported on the front page of June's edition of Action Forum or 'over 15,000' (quoted in the Editorial of the same issue). It was definitely a lot! As a result £1200 was raised for the Community Centre, and a similar amount for other organisations.

The Rainham & Wigmore Community Association, which owns the oasthouse, was formed in 1968 at a time when Rainham was expanding rapidly. Many of the newcomers found local facilities for educational and recreational activities were few, and the association was formed to help the local civic authorities provide them. Today the Community Centre is run solely by the Association, which relies on income from groups using the building, donations and volunteers. It is not funded by Medway Council or any commercial business. Major refurbishment has taken place since February 2015, and I had the chance to visit this amazing building recently when a Christmas Fair was held in early December, and saw the vast range of rooms it has to offer potential users. For more information ring 07717 624342 or email bookings@oastcentre.org But who remembers the building when it was the home of 'Wakeley Bros. (Rainham, Kent) Ltd., agricultural merchants. (Tel. Rainham 81207)'? Kelly's Directory for 1926 lists the occupiers of the oasthouse

by the station, next to the cottages known as Platform Row, as 'Wakeley Brothers Ltd. Farmers, fruit growers, agricultural merchants (Tele. No.7), while the corresponding entry for 1908 gives 'Wakeley Brothers Limited, farmers, corn factors and brick merchants'.

Can anyone supply a date when the oast was built? Or name the builders? It is thought that construction probably took place during the 1890s: its outline appears on the 1908 Ordnance Survey map. Did any of your fathers, grandfathers or greatgrandfathers work there? If you have any information please ring 01634 230324 or email rdellar283@gmail.com

RAD

COMMUNITY CHEST PROJECT

Rotary Club of Medway

Applications are invited from local charities, groups and projects in the Medway area to bid for sums of money up to £250. Charities that have benefitted previously include Hospital Radio Medway, Youth Groups, Dance Studios and Women's Institutes. Any charity or group wishing to apply this year can download an application form from www.medwayrotary.org.uk - a printed copy is available by ringing Tony Rix 01622 541975.

To qualify for a grant the applicant should: be non-profit making (if possible a charity or attached to one); have a bank account in the name of the group; request for a specific item such as equipment or a trip. It cannot be an addition to a larger fund but can be a distinct part of a larger project.

The minimum funding is £50, maximum £250 per grant. Closing date for applications is April 3rd 2017, completed forms should be emailed to info@medwayrotary.org.uk Successful applicants will be invited to send a representative to the Rotary Evening meeting on June 6th to receive the award.

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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: March 21st 2017

February 26th - Newington Table Top and Indoor Boot
Fair, 10am-3pm, Village Hall, Refreshments and hot
food available, details 01795 844949 or 07871 934848.

February 27th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm,
St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham,
new members welcome, details 01634 230500

March 1st - 31st - Art Exhibition, Paintings by Local
Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman on
show & for Sale in Rainham Library, Birling Avenue.

March 2nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's
Community Centre, 2.00pm, Royal Visits to Kent,
Colin Breed, for over 50s 01634 234712 for details.

March 2nd - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
games, tea and chat. Village Hall behind All Saints
Church 2.00 - 4.00pm. New members always welcome,
phone 07583 343782

March 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.

March 3rd - Women's World Day of Prayer, 2.00pm, St
Margaret's Church, High Street, Rainham, Service
theme 'Am I Being Unfair to You?' For more
information please see the website www.wwdp.org.uk

March 3rd - Hempstead Whist Afternoon, Scout Hall
Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead, 1.30pm, players of
all abilities welcome. A partner is not required for
details please ring Eunice on 01634 231664.

March 3rd - Games Afternoon, Lower Halstow Memorial
Hall, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Games include whist, rummikub,
euchre, scrabble and most card or board games, £1.50
includes Cup of Tea, biscuits and very warm welcome.

March 4th - Charity Folk Night, Local Singer/Songwriter
Jonica Love & friends in aid of Tear Fund, 7.30pm St.
Mark's Church, Gill, £5 at the door, 01634 570489

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 4th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed
Church hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30 - 10pm.
New and experienced dancers welcome, with or without
a partner, for more information ring 366189 or 388546.

March 5th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Riverside
Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Meet at the Visitors
Centre, Details ring 01634 337432

March 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,
meet Brian Gevaux 01634 235883, Lower Halstow,
Lapwing Drive ME9 7DZ GR 098655 for 5 mile
mainly flat walk across fields, figure of eight including
Newington. Could be muddy, 1 Stile, Dogs allowed

March 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.15am, 9.5
miles/15.3 km - Moderate circular walk finish 3.30pm
meet in Kensing Car Park, Sevenoaks (nearly opp Bell
PH - free parking and toilets TN15 6PP TQ555585 for a
circular wal . Picnic lunch Rising Sun, Cotsman Ash,
no food only hot and cold drinks. Del, 01322 525296

March 6th - Monday Hub, 10.00am - 12.30pm, St Paul's
Church, Parkwood, ME8 9PN, Board games, Table
Tennis, use of Laptop and much more, Free light
refreshments, phone Jill on 01634 230780.

March 6th - Medway Towns Bridge Club, Sociable
duplicate Bridge every Mon, Tues and Fri, 7.30pm
start, St. Luke's Methodist Church Hall, City Way,
Rochester. Table money £3.50 guests, £2.50 members
(£10 to join) usually find a partner for you on a Mon,
01634 375706, www.bridgewebs.com/medwaytowns

March 7th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed
Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gill, 7.30pm, "St
Patrick's Day" - petite and miniature arrangements
New members welcome, first visit free, no experience
needed, 01634 232998 or kayebuss@btinternet.com

March 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, Oast House
Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm, Commercial
Rose Growing - Peter Cox, New members welcome,
details from 01634 366276

March 8th - East Medway U3A, Ian Porter a local author
will be talking about The Titanic, what happened after
the ship went down. 2.00pm Rainham Mark Social
Club, Cost £2. Phone 07895 890635 for further details.

March 8th - The Medway League of Friends AGM,
7.30pm, Oliver Fisher Seminar Room, Level 4 Green
Zone Medway Maritime Hospital

March 8th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead
Village Hall, 8.00pm, Fund Raising, for details contact
Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

March 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, another visit from
Mel Rees, (see 2nd March)

March 9th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker "About
Ramadan" (see 2nd March)

March 9.10.11.16.17.18. - The Hound of the Baskervilles
a gloriously funny adaptation by Steven Canny & John
Nicholson, 8pm, Oasthouse Theatre, Box Office 0844
8793224 or on-line @ www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

March 9th - Chatham Historical Society, Lampard Centre,
Sally Port, Brompton ME7 5BU. 7:15pm. Temple
Manor and the Knights Templar - a talk by Len Feist
For details see www.chathamhistoricalsoc.btck.co.uk

March 10th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History
Society, Byron Primary School ME7 5XX. 7.15pm.
Pocahontas - Christopher Bull, Visitors welcome (small
charge) details Val Barrard 07947 583327 email
lupusrufus@sky.com or see www.grlws.weebly.com

March 10th - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland
Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Derek Nash Band with
guest vocalist Noel McCalla tribute to Stevie Wonder.
Entry £12, Enquiries 01634 365352 or 07544 312743

March 11th - RAMASES AGM followed by the Peggy
Dewey Memorial lecture given by John Dewey,
Newington Village Hall, 2.30pm, £8 for guests in
advance £9 on the day. For more information contact
annette.crowder65@gmail.com or 07476 636803.

March 11th - Applause Rural Touring Theatre, The Black
Feathers, Bredhurst Village Hall, 7.30pm, bar and light

refreshments provided. Tickets £10 from Ann Keeble,
01634 361263, all proceeds to the village hall.

March 11th - Quiz Night, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall,
7.00 for 7.30pm. £5 per person with teams of 6 or
under. Please bring your own Supper and Beverage.

March 12th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Anne Bond / Pat Wells 07778 302866 or 07804
837155 Maidstone, Armstrong Road South Park Car
park ME15 6AZ GR 764543 for a 5 mile walk via
Boughton Monchelsea & Loose Valley. Varied terrain.
Some stiles. May be muddy if wet. No Dogs

March 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 12.5
miles/20.1 km - Strenuous circular walk finishes 4.45
approx. Park in Ightham Mote (National Trust) car park
(top end). Fee non NT £2 TN15 0NT. TQ583534 walk
towards Basted and Platt. Bring picnic for midday
Some stiles and hills, could be muddy if wet. Contact:
John, 07749 760788, billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk

March 12th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Capstone
Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, learn about the
country park's management and meet new people. Meet
Volunteers block near Orchard Car Park, 01634 338191

March 13th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 27th Feb)
March 13th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,
Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8 9PN,
7.30pm, Organist - Matthew Bason, details ring Brian
Leonard 01634 234694

March 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.

March 13th - Rainham Flower Club, St Matthews Church
Hall, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, Demonstration by
Mellissa Sheldrake "The Language of Flowers"
7.30pm, see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring any
01634 864572 / 01634 863034 / 01622 884478

March 14th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm,
Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, ME8 0BX
Workshop Evening - Demonstrations and advice on
how to look after your fuchsias and pelargoniums, New
members and visitors welcome, 01634 852519

March 14th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club,
8.00pm, St. George Hotel, New Road, Chatham.
Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral, New members
welcome, ring 01634 851512 or simply just turn up

Continued on Page 11

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2nd Rainham Guides aged 10-14 meet weekly
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They both provide a safe space for girls to have fun,
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Girlguiding and how to become a volunteer or email
rainhamsouthdc@gmail.com for more information.

OASTHOUSE THEATRE A gloriously barking
spoo...The Hound of the Baskervilles
by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's adapted by
Steven Canny & John Nicholson
March 9.10.11.16.17.18. Curtain up at 8.00pm.
The adaptation being staged at the Oasthouse
Theatre, Rainham is a gloriously funny makeover
packed full of the verbal and visual ingenuity. This
sublimely funny adaptation promises to have the
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JAZZ GIG

Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland Avenue,
Friday 10th March, 8.30pm

Derek Nash Band with his special guest vocalist
Noel McCalla in a tribute to Stevie Wonder.

Entry £12 Enquiries 01634 365352 or 07544 312743
This season sees the return of the ever popular multi
saxophonist Derek Nash from Jools Holland Rhythm
and Blues Orchestra and extrovert vocalist Noel
McCalla performing songs associated with the great
musical icon Stevie Wonder. It is a combination that
sold out last year, can the music be any better this
year? Come along and join the vibe!

APPLAUSE RURAL TOURING THEATRE

The Black Feathers, one guitar and two perfectly
paired voices combining elements of folk, alt-
country, roots and Americana.

Bredhurst Village Hall, Sat March 11th, 7.30pm,
Bar and light refreshments provided.

Tickets £10 from Ann Keeble, 01634 361263

All proceeds to the village hall.

MEDWAY ANTIQUE & COLLECTORS' CLUB

Why not join a friendly club with monthly
entertaining talks on Antiques and Collectables?
Second Tuesday of every month, 7.30 for 8.00pm
St. George Hotel, New Road, Chatham.

Tuesday, 14th March,

'Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral'

Some of the forthcoming talks:-

"My Miniature Ceramics" "Hair, Hat Pins and Rats"

"Oil and Water Colour Paintings In Rochester

Museum" "Post Cards of the First World War"

"Richard Champion and his Bristol Porcelain"

"Mother of Pearl, its Production and Uses" "Turner

Paintings" "History of Teddies and Other Bears"

"Uncovering the Treasures of Bruges", "What You

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POPPIES

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR JANUARY

In late January I visited Romney Marsh and Dungeness. Recent cold, wintry weather in eastern Europe and Russia would have driven many birds to this country because of its much less severe weather. I headed for the M20 via Bredhurst, just beyond which, at the top of the Downs, I passed, much to my surprise and delight, four red legged partridges in a field of winter wheat very close to the road. They were as plain as four pike staffs and quite relaxed. They had presumably been hatched in an incubator and were destined to be sought out by a shooting party. I left the M20 at Ashford and reached the edge of Romney Marsh at the point where the road drops down to a scene of dykes, sheep and sallow trees. During the Second World War much ancient sheep pasture had to be ploughed up for the growing of wheat and, today, perhaps more than half of the agricultural land of the Marsh is used for the growing of corn, potatoes, cabbages, peas, maize and oil seed rape. I kept my eyes open for any mute, whooper or Bewick swans feeding on any of the above crops but, fortunately for the farms concerned, I saw none. I did however note two flocks of lapwings searching for worms and other invertebrates among grazing sheep. I headed for Dungeness which is the point of the "nose" of the marsh land that juts into the English Channel between Rye and New Romney. It consists mainly of shingle and is, indeed, one of the largest areas of shingle in the world. It has the characteristics of a desert but this can be misleading. It has a diverse wildlife of insects, migrating birds, other animals and over 600 species of plants. It is a National Nature Reserve. I headed, in particular, for the new restaurant at the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway terminus on the Dungeness Estate near to the two atomic power stations. From my table by one of the large picture windows of the restaurant, I had a view of some of the plants growing on the long established shingle ridges of the Ness. They included gorse (in bloom), bramble, wood sage and diminutive (or prostrate) forms of blackthorn, broom and oak. It is the lack of nutrients in the shingle that causes a tree or shrub, which has

managed to take root at Dungeness, to grow in a stunted form. In addition, the strong south westerly winds that blow unimpeded up the English Channel until they hit the promontory have the effect of shaping many plants there into a low and rounded profile. From my seat I could also see the wooden cottages on the Estate, which are now mostly owned by weekenders, but some of which are still lived in by fishing families. The latter cottages can usually be identified by fishing nets laid out to dry and by washing flapping horizontally in the wind. Lined up and overlooking the sea were fishing boats and shipping containers in which various items of shipping gear are stored. As I was eating my fish and chip lunch I witnessed a train arriving, pulled by "Southern Maid", a third normal size 4-6-2 Pacific Class locomotive built in 1927. I was delighted to watch the station master eventually wave his green flag and blow his whistle. The engine driver in turn blew the engine's own whistle and then the train moved slowly out of the station in a cloud of rising steam. I exchanged waves with many of the departing passengers: trains hauled by a steam locomotive do fortunately create an atmosphere which allows complete strangers to lose their inhibitions and wave to each other. Lunch over, I moved on to the RSPB Bird Reserve half way along the road from the Ness to Lydd. Not unnaturally, the reserve consists largely of shingle, but also includes fresh water pools, grasslands and reed beds. The Visitor Centre overlooks Burrowes Pit, the largest of the pools. Here one can sit, in warmth and comfort, and watch the birds through plate glass windows. Here I noted, among other species, brent goose, cormorant, widgeon, teal, tufted duck, shoveller, gadwall, pochard and shelduck. A notice board listed the less common species that had been seen at various hides and other places around the two mile long, circular trail, including gold crest, fire crest and tree sparrow. I decided to make a start around the trail and see how I got on. The hides have windows which, when opened, give bird watchers a sharper view. But, when a cold, prevailing wind blows through any open windows, the hides are like ice boxes. I visited just two hides, from which I saw a

couple of golden eye, a goosander and a great white egret and then decided to call it a day. I am afraid that I'm getting soft in my old age! After a warm up in the Centre and a coffee from the machine, I bade farewell to the staff and stepped outside. There in front of me was a gaggle of bird watchers pointing binoculars and telescopes at a feeding station. If there is one simple and fairly obvious rule about birdwatching, it is to keep a good watch on whatever other birdwatchers are watching. And, sure enough, I had a very good view of both a gold crest and a fire crest, two very small birds, which I might have missed had the "birders" not been there. I was determined not to overlook the tree sparrows on Boulderwall Farm at the exit of the Reserve. They too had attracted a crowd and I was able to see them for myself. I found it gratifying, and a little amusing, to watch some very humble sparrows being intently observed through some very expensive Zeiss and Swarovski binoculars and telescopes.

Joe Ennis

RAINHAM AT WAR in 1917 (Continued from January 2017)

In March news of more fatalities arrived with the death of Lance-Corporal Thomas Russell aged 20 of the East Kent Yeomanry from Station Road, killed in the trenches of France while beating back a German attack. Other fatalities included Bombardier Herbert Webb aged 22 from Ivy Street, James Wall from Station Road and George Crittenden aged 33 from Broad Walk. In May John Ashby of the East Surrey Regiment from Ivy Street was reported killed in action in France. He had earlier served as a member of the Rainham Volunteer Platoon. Later in June a bomb killed Rainham resident Elizabeth Maxted during a German air attack at Folkestone. Herbert Croucher aged 19 of the Buffs from Milton Road (now Webster Road) was killed in France and Bombardier Thomas Holloway aged 24 of the RFA from Rainham High Street died from spotted fever. More news in August revealed the death of Private Arthur Blundy from Lower Rainham aged 37 of the Middlesex Regiment who was killed in action in France. Private Maurice Naylor of the Buffs and from London Road in Rainham was wounded while serving in Iraq but died from the effects of the heat. Gunner Ide Gooding was killed in action on October 3rd in France while Captain Pitcher of the Artists and Rifles Regiment who had previously worked as assistant

master at the Council School was wounded in the head in France. After the war he received the Military Medal.

In August an air raid over Rainham lasted for about thirty minutes, two bombs were dropped and exploded, but nobody was injured. This was a rare occurrence in Rainham. Kent coastal towns suffered much more and sustained many casualties. The death of the well-known and popular Lion Hotel publican Phil Curling who died of pneumonia in December turned out to be one of the greatest losses to Rainham in 1917. Aged 47 and originally from Faversham, he had been in the public eye for some time, firstly as a well-known cyclist who had formed the Rainham Cycle Club, a licensed victualler, a promoter of sports meetings, an official at both Rainham Cricket Club and Rainham Football Club and a freemason. He also became a member of Rainham Horticultural Society and had formed the Rainham Gardeners Mutual Improvement Society. In the war years he had spoken at recruiting meetings for the Buffs and served as a special constable in the village. He had spent time as a member of the parish council and served as chairman of the Sittingbourne and District Licensed Victuallers Association. In the year before he died he organised a boxing tournament for the Red Cross Hospital in Sittingbourne. His death generated great sadness in Rainham as many residents had great respect for him.

At the end of the year the parish council discussed ploughing up the recreation ground and using it for food production but opposition from the public prevented this. News also arrived that girls and Infant's at the Church of England School gave their Christmas subscription to the Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Children's Fund. The girls raised £4/2/0d while the infants raised £3.

After a failed attempt of an allied breakthrough at Ypres in July, a major offensive at Passchendaele took place in the autumn which also failed with heavy casualties. Britain entered 1918 with the knowledge that at least the USA had entered the conflict and the hope that this might contribute to ending the conflict.

David Wood

ART EXHIBITION

Paintings by Local Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman will be on show and For Sale in Rainham Library, Birling Avenue, ME8 7LR between 1st & 31st March 2017

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Diary 2017

March 15th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Third Wednesday

every month, Village Hall, 7.30pm, Gordon Francis
'Container Gardening with Vegetables', Spring Show -
Judge: Gordon Chilmald, Bring and Buy Produce Stall,

New members always welcome, Fee £1

March 15th - Wigmore Ladies Club, Howard Hall,

Woodside, 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome to
this cheerful group, just come or ring 01634 388912

March 16th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
games, tea and chat (see 2nd March)

March 16th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Birthday Tea with

entertainment from "The Spare Parts", (see 2nd March)

March 16th - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 - 4.00pm

Members Meeting, Wakeley Hall, Community Centre,
Granary Close, Rainham. Visitors welcome for small

entry charge per visit. Ring 01634 366276 for details.

March 17th - Hempstead Whist Afternoon, (see 3rd Mar)

March 18th - Rainham South meet your local Councillor
at 3:16 Cafe Parkwood. 10.00am - 12 noon, No

appointment necessary.

March 18th - Rochester Choral Society Spring Concert,

7.00pm, Rochester Cathedral. Tickets: £15 (nave); £7
(restricted view); £5 (students) Book 01634 401049

or online: www.rochesterchoral.co.uk/tickets

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

March 19th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 6.5

miles/10.5 km - Leisurely circular walk finishes 1.30pm

meet Lullingstone Park Visitor Centre Car Park £2.50

Toilets. DA4 0JF, TQ526638 Route via River Darent,

Roman Villa, old deer park, chalk memorial and

Shoreham village, some hills. Refreshments in

Shoreham. Picnic break, Heather, 07887 750881

March 19th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am

meet Carole Shepherd 07581 409277 Blackheath A2

Shooters Hill Road parallel one way slip road on left

before traffic lights and petrol station, SE3 7BD GR TQ

402768 4 mile Greenwich Park & River Thames

waterside walk. Can visit museums, indoor market, 15

mins walk to the start at Blackheath Gate, No Dogs.

March 20th - Monday Hub, (see 6th March)

March 20th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St

Paul's Church, Parkwood, 7.30pm, Speaker Sue

Duckworth "Stained Glass at Canterbury", All

welcome, ring 01634 360797 or just come along.

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March 20th - Wigmore WI 7.30 - 9.30pm, St Matthew's

Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. Anyone
interested ring 01634 372976 or 01634 268611

March 21st - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,

Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30 - 9.45 pm £3.50.

Birds of Kent - Brian Nobbs, For Field Trips:

www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

March 21st - GHS Floral Art Group, "Mothering Sunday"

Living home-made card, fresh flowers, (see 7th March)

March 22nd - All Saints Women's Fellowship,

Debutantes - Barbara Stevens, (see 8th March)

March 23rd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Hong Kong, Bob

Appleton, (see 2nd March)

March 23rd - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker Miss

Liberson "5 days on a life raft" (see 2nd March)

March 24th - Inner Wheel Club of Gillingham, fund

raising Quiz Bingo, Upchurch River Valley Golf Club

Restaurant, 7.00pm sharp, Tables of 6, Tickets £10,

includes Chicken & Chips supper, proceeds for

'Making Miracles'. Tickets 01634 234035, 07547

250010 or rosemarie.barnes777@gmail.com

March 24th - Medway Geographical Society, Holy Trinity

Church, Twydall Lane, ME8 6TN Plenty of parking,

7.30 - 9.00pm, 'Parks and Gardens of Flanders' -

Melanie Gibson-Barton, All welcome, come on the

evening or ring Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

March 25th - Charity Coffee Morning / Cake Sale in aid

of British Heart Foundation and 20th Gillingham

(Hempstead) Air Scout Group, 10am - 1pm, Scout HQ,

Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead, All Invited. Free

Entry, Donations of cakes welcome.

March 25th - Concert, St. Mary Magdalene Church, "The

Warblers", 7.00pm. In aid of the Church's re-ordering

project, tickets £6 includes refreshments 01634

853459 gillinghamparishchurch@gmail.com or Hilda

01634 932135. Free car parking at Saxon Way School.

March 25th - Kent Police Male Voice Choir, 7.30pm St.

Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, Tickets £10

including refreshments Wendy Keast 01634 230325.

March 25th - Murder Mystery Evening, The Jhansi Jewels

Affair, Newington Village Hall ME9 7JJ, 7.30pm, £6

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Diary 2017

March 26th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Roger Danks 07866 971819 Northwood Hill
Nature Reserve, High Halstow ME3 8TQ GR 782757
7 mile flat walk which may be muddy, Dogs allowed
March 26th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, 5
miles/8.1 km - Leisurely fairly flat circular walk finish
12.45pm approx. Penenden Heath ME14 2DQ. After
morning break continue with Len's walk 5 miles or with
Chris 11.5 mile (steep climbs on longer walk). Bring a
picnic lunch. Pub at end 1pm shorter. 3.30pm longer
with lunch. 01634 319391, lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk
March 27th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 27th Feb)
March 29th - Egg Art, Capstone Farm Country Park,
10.00am - 12noon, Learn about the different eggs laid
by birds to inspire your very own egg design this
Easter. Suitable for the whole family. £3 per child,
Booking essential ring 01634 338191
March 29th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, Spring
Show, Seed Potatoes will also be distributed for potato
weigh in later this year, (see 7th March)
March 30th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Make and Bake
fund raising (see 2nd March)
March 30th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting,
(see 2nd March)
March 30th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall,
Woodside, Rainham, All welcome, more details from
Sylvia Wildridge 01634 312038
April 1st - Beekeeping Course, 10.00am to 12 noon, for
10 weeks commencing, The Oast House, Granary
Close, Rainham. Further details from Pat & Terry Clare
on 01634 233748 or patclare89@me.com
April 1st - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 4th March)
April 2nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,
meet Lindsay Floyd / Andy Boorman 07881 933358
Higham Railway Station car park (free) ME3 7JQ GR
715726 for a 5.25 mile historical walk in the footsteps
of Dickens and his dream house Gad's Hill Place. An
easy walk. No stiles. No Toilets. Dogs allowed

April 3rd - Monday Hub, (see 6th March)
April 3rd - Medway Towns Bridge Club, (see 6th March)
April 4th - GHS Floral Art Group, "Easter Basket" - fresh
flowers, (see 7th March)
April 6th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker Glen
Bareham "Every Picture tells a Story" (see 2nd March)
April 6th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Truffle Making
Demonstration, Gill Cromarty, (see 2nd March)
April 7th - 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.
April 7th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History
Society, Crossings of the Lower Thames and Medway -
Rob Poole, (see 10th March)
April 8th - Barnardos Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm start,
Twydall Church Hall Gillingham, Tickets £5 each.
Tables of 6-8, Bring your own Drink and Nibbles, Free
Tea Coffee and Biscuits available, Book in advance,
01634 233405 or 01634 375486
April 9th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Doreen Maguire 01634 37623 Capstone Park, Ski
Slope entrance upper car park ME7 3JH GR 782646 for
a 5 mile undulating walk around park and surrounding
area including Darland and Hempstead. Using grass
tracks and minimum road walking. Minimum steps and
no stiles, no known mud. Dogs allowed
April 10th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 27th Feb)
April 10th - Rainham Flower Club, Workshop tutored by
Graham King on "Spheres" (see 13th March)
April 10th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,
Organist - Paul Roberts, (see 13th March)
April 10th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship
Group, (see 13th March)

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