

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

MAY 2017  
NUMBER 531



The children of Bredhurst School dressed in their finery for the May Day Celebration probably about 1897. The children include: Back row: Maddocks, Chandler, Maddocks, Tom Glover, Beth Parker, David Glover. Third row: Charlie Rayfield, Goodridge, Sonia Glover, Bill Brooks, Tom Stevenson. Second row: David Stevenson, Nell Wood, Annie Barton, Reeves, Charlie Johnson, Emmie Belcher. Front: Dolly Whitehead, Reeves, Amy Wood, Ike Hitchcock, Alice Sharp, Bert Brooks, Edie Glover. The event continues to this day with particular enthusiasm this year as the school celebrates its 150th anniversary with the parade, crowning of the May King and Queen and a Fete on Saturday May 20th. Everyone is welcome to join in this happy tradition.

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AF

Next Issue June 3rd 2017  
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## Editorial

Congratulations to Bredhurst Village who are celebrating the 150th anniversary of their school with a spectacular Village May Day experience. All past May Kings and Queens are invited to join in the festivities on May 20th. As usual the street will be closed while the procession takes place. The children of 1867, when the school was founded, would probably have been dressed in a very similar way to those of 1897 who appear on our front cover this month. I suspect many of the surnames would have been familiar to the villagers of 1867 as they are to today's residents. Things changed very little during those thirty years – it was only after the 1914-18 war that the gigantic strides forward in dress, life style, transport and farming began. Judging from the expressions on the children's faces, either they did not enjoy dressing up in their best for a May Day group photograph or the days of 'smile for the birdie' or 'say cheese' were yet to come – several have particularly rebellious grimaces.

I have recently come across an advert for a group entitled 'Love Walking'. It accurately sums up the advantages although I do not think you need to 'love' the exercise to benefit from it.

Apparently 'Walking can: Reduce blood pressure; Reduce cholesterol and fat; Reduce stress and help you sleep better; Improve muscle strength; Help to manage your weight; Make you feel good and so much more'. It concludes with the sentiment that 'You can do it anytime, anywhere and it is a great opportunity to make new friends' and the slogan 'Its Free, Fun, Fitness and makes you look Fab.' How could anyone resist such tempting achievements? Actually despite the hyperbole they are pretty much on the money. Walking really is a magical, miracle cure. When Bredhurst School was built it was common practise for the men of Rainham to walk to Bredhurst after church on Sunday morning passing the parishioners of Bredhurst walking to Rainham. Why this sudden desire to visit a neighbouring parish? Well the licencing laws of the time only allowed pubs to serve 'travellers' on Sunday, ie those who had walked at least three miles and so needed a refreshing drink. A round trip of six miles just to buy a drink was nothing to these villagers who regularly walked far longer distances. Modern life has made us all so busy we believe we do not have time to walk, instead we jump in the car, but we would probably be much healthier

and take far fewer pills if we made the time to walk. There are many ways nowadays to help you get back into the way of walking, you can join one of the organised groups or simply put on your boots and step out along the many footpaths we have in our area. They are at their prettiest at this time of year, through orchards of blossom, woodland seas of wood anemone and bluebells or open downland covered in carpets of wild flowers – you may even spot some orchids. Whatever you do have a very good month and we will be back in June.

## Correspondence

### PIPE ORGAN APPEAL

Dear Editor,

The pipe organ at the Catholic Church in London Road, Rainham is in need of restoration. This is a lovely organ with a fresh and lively sound. It was built at the same time as the church, in 1959. To help raise money for the restoration, we shall be having a series of organ recitals in the church this summer. The first recital will be at 7.30pm on Friday 19th May and the organist will be Barry Kemp, organist at St Margaret's Rainham and a local councillor. Admission will be £10, with unwaged and under 25's free.

With kind regards,  
John Wilkins

Organist, St Thomas' Rainham

### TRAIN at RAINHAM STATION

Dear Editor,

I was interested to read your editorial containing information relating to the train photo taken at Rainham Station shown on the front cover of the March issue 529 of Action Forum. Unfortunately the train you describe using the Dover-Calais train ferry was the 'Night Ferry' which used continental sleeping cars especially constructed to fit the smaller British loading gauge. The BR Standard Class 5-hauled train in the photo was probably the 'Thanet Belle', which was run by the Southern Region of British Railways from 1948 until it was withdrawn in 1958 due to the impending electrification of the route. It ran from Victoria to Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate.

This train, composed of British Pullman stock, had its origins in the 'Thanet Pullman Limited' introduced by the South eastern and Chatham Railway in July 1921 but withdrawn in 1928. Reintroduced as the 'Thanet Belle' in 1948, from 1951 three coaches were detached at Faversham and ran separately through to Canterbury East. This Canterbury service ceased after only a year, but the 'Thanet Belle' name was retained. The 'Belle' was withdrawn after 1958, allegedly because of the impending completion of the first phase of Kent Coast Electrification beyond Gillingham in 1959. However, the real reason was probably poor patronage of the service. The greater number of passengers using the 'Golden Arrow' boat train that you mentioned ensured that the latter survived well into the electrification era.

Thanks for a great magazine, can we have some more local railway photos, please?

Best Wishes  
David Brigenshaw  
11A Bedson Walk

Editor: We would love to print more railway photos – if you have any please do get in touch.

### THE OAST CENTRE, RAINHAM AGM

Dear Editor,

Monday 12th June from 8.00pm.

We would be delighted to welcome new members to our AGM to find out about the last year at The Oast Centre (by Rainham Station) and to meet the team. Constitutionally you need to join as a member, £5 per year, in advance of the meeting in order to attend. This is payable by cash or cheque (Please include name, phone, email and full address) and put in cash box or pay to a member of bookings (Ann or Jac). We are hoping to arrange a way to pay online soon. Keep your eyes open around the centre and on FB 'The Oast' for more details.

Yours sincerely  
Liz O'Hanlon  
email Secretary@oastcentre.org

### MONDAY HUB

Dear Editor

We are writing to invite readers of Action Forum to The Monday Hub which meets at St Paul's Church in Parkwood, ME8 9PN, on the following Mondays in 2017: 8, 22 May; 12, 26 Jun; 10, 24 Jul; 7, 14, 21 Aug; 11, 25 Sep; 9, 23 Oct; 6, 20 Nov; 4, 18 Dec.

The Hub, now in its seventh year, is open from 10am – 12.30pm with light refreshments, (tea, coffee and hot chocolate - all free), lively conversations about books we've read, the day's news, what we've been doing, etc. There's an ongoing jigsaw, card and board games such as UNO, Rummikub, Scrabble and more. For the more active there are table tennis, boccia and kurling. Some people drop in for a coffee and to read the paper or to contribute food items for the Medway Food Bank. We think it's a good way to start the week. Come and meet us - whether you are at home due to retirement or ill health, when you've dropped children or grandchildren off at school, before you go shopping in Parkwood or visit the Health Centre. We now have a laptop with help on hand to use it. Everyone is welcome.

If you would like to speak to somebody before your first visit to the Monday Hub, please phone Jill on 01634 230780. Come for a cuppa and make friends!

Yours sincerely

The Monday Hub Planning Team

### NEWINGTON VILLAGE FESTIVAL

School Field, ME9 7LB

Saturday 15th July, Noon – 6.00pm

Promote your business through our Festival. Several low-cost marketing, promotional and advertising opportunities are available in advance of, and at, the festival, one of the largest events of its kind in Swale. For details 07719 942782 email sepr@hotmail.co.uk. The festival is organised by the Parish Council in conjunction with Demelza Children's Hospice. Could you help organising or assist on the day? Contact 07590 464700 email tonymould1@sky.com You can follow the festival updates on Facebook or Twitter @NewingtonFest.

### CRAFT AND GIFT FAYRE

Stallholders needed for our annual Craft and Gift Fayre in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital on Saturday 28th October at St Matthews Church Hall, Gillingham, 11.00am till 2.00pm. Ideal opportunity to start thinking about Christmas! Further details please contact Paula 01634 373450, 07930 595856 or Stacey 07897 007979

### DISTRIBUTION

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# Diary 2017

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Copy should be in writing either by email to [af@thenet.uk.net](mailto:af@thenet.uk.net) or 5 Meresborough Cottages, Meresborough, Gillingham, Kent ME8 8PP

Diary Copy Date: May 23rd 2017

May 6th - RAMASES Suzanne Lax-Boyots - Tuthmosis III - The Napoleon of Egypt, Newington Village Hall, 2.30pm, £8 for guests in advance £9 on the day. Details [annette.crowder65@gmail.com](mailto:annette.crowder65@gmail.com) or 07476 636803.

May 6th - BWAG AGM, 3.00pm, Arran Bank Farm, Dunn Street, Bredhurst ME7 3ND, guest speaker, David Fleck, The Woodland Trust, Members and non-members welcome details 07813 785940

May 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Lamberhurst, 10.00am, Leisurely circular walk 4.5 miles / 7.2 km, finish 12.30pm. Meet in public park near the Chequers Inn public house, Lamberhurst - TN3 8HX TQ676362 Views of Scotney Castle, Contact: Frank/Mim

May 7th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am meet David Brown 07815 106791 Ightham Mote Carpark (next to café) carpark charge non NT members GR584535 TN15 0NT 6.5mile undulating walk to Old Soar Manor. May be muddy if wet. 6 Stiles

May 7th - Volunteer Conservation Day, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Get involved at the Country Park. Meet at the volunteer block near the orchard car park for details ring 01634 338191

May 8th - 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

May 8th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, details 01634 235000

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May 8th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8 9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Claudia Hirschfeld, Ticket only event £4 from Brian Leonard 01634 234694

May 8th - Rainham Flower Club, St Matthews Church Hall, Drewery Drive, ME8 0NX Workshop Tutored by Pat Williams on "Seascapes" 7.30pm, information see website [www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk](http://www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk) or ring 01634 864572 / 01634 863034 / 01622 884478

May 8th - 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.

May 9th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, ME8 0BX Growing Pelargoniums by grower and hybridiser - Steve Pollard, Members £1, Non-members £1.50, New members and visitors always welcome, 01634 852519

May 9th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, 8.00pm, St. George Hotel, New Road, Chatham. 'Oil and Watercolour Paintings in Rochester Museum', New members welcome, 01634 851512 or just turn up

May 10th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Otford - Farningham (Linear walk), 10.00am, Leisurely walk 6.5 miles / 10.5 km, finish 1.15pm, Meet in Otford public car park (charge). Toilets TN14 5PQ, TQ525594 A linear walk follows Darent Valley Path return on the 1.20pm bus from Farningham. Contact: Graham, 07989 753278, [graham.jenkinson@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:graham.jenkinson@blueyonder.co.uk)

May 10th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, AGM, details 07951 629444

May 11th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Village Hall behind All Saints Church 2.00 - 4.00pm, whist, board games, tea and chat New members welcome. 07583 343782

May 11th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, A Wealden Woman's War, Penny Harris, for over 50s ring 01634 234712

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May 11th - Chatham Historical Society, Lampard Centre, Sally Port, Brompton ME7 5BU. 7.15pm. 'Gravesham Round and About' - a talk by Christoph Bull

For details see [www.chathamhistoricalsociety.btcc.co.uk](http://www.chathamhistoricalsociety.btcc.co.uk)  
May 11.12.13.18.19.20 - 'Don't Dress For Dinner' by Marc Camoletti, Curtain up 8.00pm, Box Office 0844 8793224 or on-line [www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk)

May 12th - 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.

May 12th - Grand Charity Auction, Rotary Club of Medway, Viewing 1.00 - 5.00pm Auction 7.00pm, Roffen Club, 41 New Road, Rochester, ME1 1DX Catalogues £1 All proceeds to Young Lives Foundation and Air Ambulance

May 12th - UpARA Upchurch Active Retirement Association, Monthly Meeting, Upchurch Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2, For details email Chairman David Powell [davidrpowell5@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:davidrpowell5@hotmail.co.uk)

May 12th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, Byron Primary School ME7 5XX. 7.15pm, AGM/Quiz Night, Visitors welcome (small charge) details Val Barrand 07947 583327 email [lupusrufus@sky.com](mailto:lupusrufus@sky.com) or see [www.grlhs.org](http://www.grlhs.org)

May 13th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham, 9.00am - 12.30pm, Free entry, Stalls are £10 each contact [cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com](mailto:cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com) or ring 07779 366054 for more details

May 13th - Annual Plant Sale, Macklands House, Station Road, Rainham, 10.30am refreshments and a cake stall.

May 13th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church hall, Balmoral Road, Gill, 7.30 - 10.00pm. New and experienced dancers welcome, with or without a partner, for more information ring 366189 or 388546.

May 13th - The Kingfisher Singers, 7.30pm, St Margaret's Church, Rainham in aid of The Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund, Light refreshments included, raffle, Tickets, £7.50 in advance from St Margaret's Church office (mornings) and 01634 232665 on the door £8.

May 14th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 828249 A228 Whetstep Road, Beltring, left just beyond hop farm, GR671469 5 mile flat walk. Dogs allowed

May 14th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Harrietsham, 10.00am, Leisurely circular walk 6.5 miles / 10.5 km, finish 1.30pm, Meet and park in the car park on the

south side A2 at Harrietsham ME17 1AH, TQ867525 bring picnic lunch. Contact: Derek, 07768 448633, [derek.kent@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:derek.kent@blueyonder.co.uk)

May 14th - Kent Wildlife Trust, Managing Man Orchids, Darland Banks, 10.00am - 12.30pm, meet end of Star Lane ME7 3ER donations welcome ring 07808 085031

May 14th - Volunteer Conservation Day, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Meet at the visitor centre ring 01634 337432 for details.

May 15th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St Paul's Church, Parkwood, 7.30pm, AGM, All welcome, ring Kate Archer 01634 360797 or just come along.

May 15th - Wigmore WI Meet every 3rd Monday in the month 7.30 - 9.30pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Anyone interested ring Chris Ellison 01634 372976 or Barbara Strachan 01634 268611

May 16th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.45pm £3.50. Protecting Marine Life in Kent and Medway - KWT Marine Officer for Field Trips: [www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway](http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway).

May 16th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, Ikebana arrangement - using a pin holder, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed, for details contact Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email [kayebuss@btinternet.com](mailto:kayebuss@btinternet.com)

May 17th - Wigmore Ladies Club, Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome to this cheerful group, just come along or ring 01634 388912 for more information

May 17th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Third Wednesday every month, Village Hall, 7.30pm, Christopher Wade 'An Illustrated Walk Around the Saxon Shore Way' - Part 1, Bring and Buy Produce Stall, New members always welcome, ring 07791 781 910 for details

May 18th - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 - 4.00pm Speaker on 'Making Miracles' Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community Centre, Rainham. Visitors welcome for small entry charge. Ring 01634 366276 for details.

May 18th - Wigmore Thursday Club, 'And so to Ted' - A History of Teddy Bears, Melanie Gibson-Barton, (see 11th May).

May 18th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Demonstrating the art of tapestry, come and have a go. Tea and chat (see 11th May).

Continued on Page 11

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 Rainham residents are welcome to visit the new  
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 place at Berengrove Park.

**ART EXHIBITION**  
 Paintings by Local Artists Clive Bass and John  
 Gilson will be on show and For Sale in Wigmore  
 Library, 208, Fairview Avenue, Gillingham between  
 1st May & 31st May 2017.

**OASTHOUSE THEATRE RAINHAM**  
**Don't Dress For Dinner**  
 by Marc Camoletti  
 May 11.12.13.18.19.20 Curtain up at 8pm  
 Bernard is planning a romantic weekend with his  
 chic Parisian mistress in his charming converted  
 French farmhouse, whilst his wife, Jacqueline, is  
 away. He has arranged for a cordon bleu cook to  
 prepare gourmet delights, and has invited his best  
 friend, Robert, along too to provide the alibi.  
 Box Office on 0844 8793224 or on-line @  
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**ANNUAL PLANT SALE**  
 Macklands House, Station Road, Rainham  
 Saturday 13th May, 10.30am  
 plus Refreshments and a Cake Stall.

**THE KINGFISHER SINGERS**  
 Saturday 13th May, 7.30pm  
 A musical evening in aid of  
 The Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund  
 St Margaret's Church, Rainham  
 Light refreshments included.  
 There will be a separate raffle  
 Tickets from St Margaret's Church office (mornings)  
 and 01634 232665 - £7.50. On the door £8.  
 The Kingfisher Singers are well known and popular.  
 We thank them for supporting this charity.

**QUIZ EVENING**  
 Saturday 20th May 7.00 for 7.30pm start  
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 St Matthews Community Centre, Wigmore.  
 Tickets Sue 01634 370639, £7 adult, £6 concessions

**HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE FAYRE 2017**  
 Sunday, 21st May, 11.30am  
 Hempstead Playing Field, Harrow Road,  
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 family. Free entry for all.  
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 or other vehicles of interest. Please contact Michelle  
 hvfvintagevehicles@yahoo.co.uk or 07952 393457

**SPRING FAIR**  
 Sunday 28th May 11.00am - 4.00pm  
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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR APRIL

This month's notes are about Bredhurst Wood and, in particular, about adders, bluebells, woodmanship and cream teas. Adders emerge from hibernation in the spring. Like all reptiles, they are cold blooded and so need to warm themselves in the sun before they can become active. Adders can be recognised by the zig-zag pattern along their backs. In general, the colour of the male is greyish and the female brownish. They kill their prey with a venomous bite and feed chiefly on lizards but also take small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews, among other prey. Young adders, which are born fully formed in the late summer, will initially feed on insects but, as juveniles, will eat young lizards. Adders hibernate communally, in the autumn, in a hollow under heaps of brushwood, for example. Last April I joined other members of the Bredhurst Wood Action Group (BWAG) for a visit to Day Valley, which is adjacent to Bredhurst Wood, in search of adders basking in the spring sunshine. We were led by Dr Lee Brady of the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group. Lee explained that the free-draining soils of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge, both of which run across Kent, are good places to find adders. An ideal adder habitat is one with a complex vegetation structure. Day Valley consists of a hay meadow which is surrounded mostly by woodland but, in part, a thick blackthorn hedge. We walked slowly round the woodland edge, being careful where we placed our shadows. Very soon a male adder was spotted sunbathing and some time was spent observing and photographing it. Just as we were about to move on, a second male appeared and the two of them reared up and began to wind themselves about each other in a bid to obtain a dominant hold. This was an event in nature that almost all of us had never before witnessed. Later we spotted an almost black adder, curled up, in the sunshine, under a stretch of bramble. This sighting was of some delight to us all, for it was in an area that had been thoughtlessly cleared, some time ago, with a mechanical flaying machine, by a contractor for National Grid, at the wrong time of the year and, in doing so, had chopped an adder into

pieces. It was good to see that at least one adder had reoccupied the re-growing vegetation of the area. In April of each year the Action Group ([www.bwag.org.uk](http://www.bwag.org.uk)) organises walks around Bredhurst Wood, on a given weekend, to see the bluebells. The flowers are shown off to good effect in the dappled sunlight of the sweet chestnut coppicing in the wood. Other flowers that may be seen include primrose, cowslip, milkmaid or lady's smock, ramson (wild garlic), greater stitchwort, wood anemone and lesser celandine. The songs of blackbird, song thrush, chaffinch, blackcap and chiff chaff can usually be heard. I went on one of the bluebell walks last April. During the tour through the bluebells, we visitors stopped to see coppicing work being carried out by volunteers under the direction of Steve Wright, woodsman and, at the time of our visit, a trustee of BWAG. The vast majority of coppiced trees in the wood are sweet chestnut, originally planted from about 1800 onwards and subsequently coppiced, mainly for hop poles and fencing. Hop production peaked in the late 19th century and declined thereafter. Thus, when BWAG took over management of the wood in 2005, most of the coppiced sweet chestnut trees had not been cut for over 40 years and were very overgrown. Since then, parts of the wood have been opened up by contractors and, more recently, by the volunteers. The result is that light has been let into these parts of the wood, allowing wild flowers such as bluebell, wood anemone and lesser celandine to reappear and prosper. Mr Wright showed the visitors samples of the items that had been made from the cut down sweet chestnut poles. They included post and rail fencing, a gate, handles for birch besoms, a hay rake, roof shingles, hedge laying stakes, tent pegs, bean poles, pea sticks and a faggot (bundle of sticks) of the size used by the Environment Agency for the repair of river banks. Mr Wright explained that sweet chestnut wood splits easily and neatly along the grain and also contains tannins which enable it to remain rot-free for very much longer than Scandinavian soft wood. When I heard Mr Wright talking about faggots it occurred to me that a small aspect of woodmanship has not changed for over 700 years. Boxley Abbey records show that, in certain years of the 14th century,

almost one hundred cart loads of poles and faggots from Monkdown Wood (which adjoins Bredhurst Wood) were used in the reinforcement of sea walls around the Abbey's grazing marshes on the Medway. Unfortunately, BWAG does produce enough faggots to act as a supplier to the Environment Agency. However, John Leigh Pemberton of Torry Hill Estate, near Sittingbourne, once told me that he supplies bundles of what he called sweet chestnut "tops" for the reinforcement of the banks of rivers and salt marshes. It is quite amazing that a technique employed by monks in the 14th century is still carried out in the 21st century. In due course, we bluebell lovers headed for a delicious cream tea at Arran Bank Farm.

Joe Ennis

## RAINHAM IN THE 1850s

Still a relatively small village located on the edge of the borough of Sittingbourne and Milton, Rainham had a population of 1,155 in 1851 compared with 722 in 1801, therefore, the population more than doubled in just fifty years.

Village residents mainly inhabited the High Street with a small number of houses in White Horse Lane (later Station Road). Although there were some businesses agriculture remained the main source of employment in an area renowned for its wheat growing soil. Cherry orchards existed just off the High Street and hops were grown at Moor Street and Siloam Farm in Chapel Lane (now Mierscourt Road) but much of the farmland was arable.

The Earl of Thanet, St Katherine's Hospital and John Wingfield-Stratford were principal landowners while well-known local farmers included Thomas Dodd in central Rainham, James Miles at Siloam Farm and Richard Wakeley at Moor Street Farm. Smaller farmers included Tom Gilbert, Daniel Green, William Packman, James Mansfield, Walter Prentis, William Smart, Charles Rich, James Wilkins and Robert Watson.

William Walter lived in Berengrove House and owned Berengrove Park and farmland which included picturesque woodland with ponds stretching to the present day railway station and this served as a popular venue for residents to relax at weekends. St Margaret's Church dominated the High Street where Reverend John Poore served as vicar. Shops included butcher Robert Maddocks, grocer and draper William Moss, blacksmith George Pope and

shopkeeper George Turner. Tom Wyles served as a beer retailer, William Burley as a tailor, James Atkins a malster and James Taylor a plumber and glazier. Further along the High Street at the bottom of Chapel Lane George Longley owned Mardale Nursery. Henry Penfold worked as the village doctor while Caroline Bleeze became a long serving postmistress at the post office and also ran a bakery. Thomas Hutchinson and his wife Dorothy ran the National School, constructed and opened in White Horse Lane on the site of the present day shopping centre in 1847.

David Wood

## THE ROTARY CLUB of MEDWAY SUNLIGHT

The Rotary Club of Medway Sunlight, one of six Rotary Clubs in the Medway area, is the only one of the six which meets for breakfast. We meet every Thursday morning from 7.30 for an hour, at St Mary's Island Community Centre. Potential new members or anyone who wishes to learn more about what we do to help make a difference in the community is welcome to join us for a breakfast meeting. Ring Jane 07932 397016 or see our website at [www.medwaysunlightrotary.org.uk](http://www.medwaysunlightrotary.org.uk).

Each May, we organise a Dragon Boat race at Chatham Maritime, raising money for Rotary charities and in particular the "Children's Hospice Holidays", a four-day EuroDisney holiday for very sick children from Demelza and Ellenor Hospices to experience together with their families and their Hospice Carer or Nurse. In 2016, the Dragon Boat event raised over £12,000 for charity.

The Dragon Boat race is held within Chatham Maritime's Food and Drink Festival. Entry to the festival and to watch all the exciting Dragon Boat races is free. The Festival runs this year from Saturday 27th to Monday 29th May, with the Dragon Boat racing taking place on Sunday 28th May. Linked to the Race, we hold the "Dragon Draw", a large lottery with some fantastic prizes which is drawn on the day of the Dragon Boat Race. This year, prizes include a family watersports experience, a bespoke garden sundial, tours of a local craft distillery or a brewery and many more great prizes. Draw tickets are available locally now or at the Festival or ring Wendy on 07816 159668 to find out how to buy tickets for a chance to win a great prize.

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## Diary 2017

May 19th - UpARA Upchurch Active Retirement

Association, Village Walk, 10.00am (see 12th May).

May 19th - Hempstara Whist, 1.30pm start Scout Hall,  
Dukes Meadow Drive, whist players of All abilities  
welcome, a partner not required, details 01634 231664

May 19th - Organ Recital with Barry Kemp, St Thomas  
of Canterbury Church, Rainham, 7.30pm Adm £10 in  
aid of Organ Repair Fund. Unwaged and under 25 Free.

May 19th - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland  
Avenue, Gillingham, 8.00pm, Christian Brewer/  
Damon Brown Quintet, Admission £12, Enquiries  
01634 365352 or 07544 312743

May 20th - Rainham Historical Society Cambridge  
Excursion - Pick-up: Lukehurst/High Street, Rainham  
8.00am & Barnsole Road at 8.15am, Cost £18 contact  
Val Ware 01634 366276 for tickets and details

May 20th, Rainham South meet your local councillor at  
3:16 Cafe Parkwood, 10.00am - 12 noon. No  
appointment necessary.

May 20th - Art and Craft Fair, 12noon - 2.30pm, St  
Augustine Church Hall, Top of Rock Avenue,  
Gillingham ME75PW. Free Admission. Stalls £5 in  
advance, £7 on day if available contact 01634 849818

May 20th - "Joining Voices" - Medway choirs together in  
profits to Friends of Wisdom Hospice 7.00pm, Mid  
Kent College Theatre, Gillingham ME7 1FN. Tickets  
£10 07816 159668 or email JVTickets@outlook.com

May 20th - Wigmore Voices (formerly Wigmore MADS)  
present 'As Long as I Have Music', 8.00pm, St  
Matthews Community Centre, Wigmore. Tickets from  
Sue 01634 370639, £7 adult, £6 concessions

May 20th - May Day Event, Bredhurst School All May  
Kings and Queens from past years are invited. For more  
information email tracey@kitchenculturekent.com

May 20th - Summer Serenade Concert, Christine Hubbard  
returns to St. Mary Magdalene Church Gill, 7.00pm,  
tickets £8 each gillinghamparishchurch@gmail.com  
Parish Office 01634 853459 or Hilda 01634 932135.

May 20th - Quiz Evening, 7.30pm start, Carmel Hall,  
Upton Lane, Sittingbourne ME10 1JB, £5 pp BYO  
Drinks/Food/Nibbles/Glasses, Tables of 6 to 8, Net  
proceeds for Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus,  
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May 21st - Medway Ramblers Walk, Teynham, 10.00am,  
Leisurely circular walk 8.5 miles / 13.7 km, finish  
2.45pm, Meet front of Dover Castle Inn (20 London  
Road, ME9 9QS, TQ954623) on the A2. Contact:  
Geoff, geoff.rambler@me.com

May 21st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,  
meet Roger Norman 01634 232404 07941 965272 Gore  
Court Cricket Ground A2 / Key Street GR 887642

ME10 1PR, 6 mile undulating walk with some slopes  
but no hills. 1Stile. Steps can be avoided. No toilets.  
Walk via Bobbing Church & Chestnut Street, No Dogs

May 21st - Hempstead Village Fayre, Playing Field,  
Harrow Road, behind the Flying Saucer Pub, 11.30am,  
All welcome, Vintage Vehicles, arena events, games,  
plenty to entertain all the family. Free entry for all.

May 22nd - Monday Hub, (see 8th May).

May 22nd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 8th May).

May 23rd - UpARA Upchurch Active Retirement  
Association, Coffee Morning, Upchurch Village Hall,  
9.30am, Members £1, Guests £2, (see 12th May).

May 25th - Hempstead Leisure Club, to be arranged  
(see 11th May).

May 25th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social (11th May).

May 25th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and  
Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall,  
Woodside, Rainham, All welcome, more details from  
Sylvia Wildridge 01634 312038

May 26th - Medway Geographical Society, Holy Trinity  
Church, Twydall Lane, ME8 6TN Plenty of parking  
available, 7.30 - 9.00pm, AGM followed by Holiday  
Memories, Everyone welcome, please come on the  
evening or ring Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

May 27th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 13th May).

May 28th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Yalding, 10.00am,  
Leisurely circular walk 7 miles / 11.3 km, end 2.00pm,  
Park in village and meet by the war memorial ME18

6JA, TQ699502 Bring picnic lunch Pub at end with  
lunches Ade, 01634 306405, adeballard@yahoo.co.uk

May 28th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,  
meet David Gaul 07719 382284 Leysdown, Shellness  
Road, Tea Hut GR044697 ME12 4RJ 7.5 mile walk to  
Harty Church. 3 Stiles, Finish 2.30pm, No Dogs

May 28th - Dragon Boat Race, Medway Sunlight Rotary,  
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## Diary 2017

May 28th - Cats Protection Bredhurst Adoption Centre,  
Spring Fair, Matts Hill Road ME9 7XA 11.00am -  
4.00pm, Entrance 50p, free parking nearby. Details  
Cats Protection 01634 232471.

May 30th - Beginners Birdwatching, Riverside Country  
Park, 10.00am - 3.00pm, No experience necessary  
Please bring your own binoculars. £10 per person (£5  
concessions) Booking essential 01634 337432.

May 30th - Orienteering Family Fun, Capstone Farm  
Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon Suitable for groups,  
families and individuals £3 pp book 01634 338191

May 31st - Mud Faces, Capstone Farm Country Park,  
10.00am - 12noon. Suitable for the whole family, £3  
per person, Booking essential 01634 338191

May 31st - Gillingham Horticultural Society, AGM,  
7.30pm, United Reformed Church, Balmoral Road,  
Gillingham, 7.15pm light refreshments available.

June 1st - Medway Ramblers Evening walk 7.00pm,  
Leisurely circular walk 4 miles / 6.4 km finish 9.15pm  
Meet and park near the Yew Tree Public House  
Sandling ME14 3DB, TQ757584, 4 stiles Contact: Len,  
01634 319391, lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk

June 1st - Big Bug Hunt, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am  
- 12noon or 1.00 - 3.00pm, Pond Dipping and Sweep  
Netting, suitable for all family, children must be  
accompanied by an adult, £3 pp book 01634 337432

June 1st - Wigmore Thursday Club, The Wildlife &  
Estuaries of North Kent, Alan Jarrett, (see 11th May).

June 1st - Hempstead Leisure Club, whist, board games,  
tea and chat (see 11th May)

June 2nd - UpARA Village Walk, 10am (see 12th May).

June 4th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,  
meet John Trebill 01634 244045 Snodland Station car  
park, Fee £1 GR 707619 for 6.5 mile walk. No Dogs

June 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Leisurely  
circular walk 7.5 miles / 12.1 km finish 2.15pm the  
walk begins at the village green in Weald Village -  
TN14 6PY, TQ526508 up to 20 stiles . Contact: Len,  
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June 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Strenuous  
circular walk 18 miles / 29 km finish 7.45pm Park &  
Meet in the car park of Faversham Railway Station.

Bring picnic Contact: Geoff, geoff.rambler@me.com  
June 4th - Volunteer Conservation Day, Capstone Farm  
Country Park, (see 7th May).

June 5th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 8th May).

June 6th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm,  
Growing Dahlias - Darren Everest, Rainham Cricket  
Club, Berengrave Lane, New members welcome, ring  
366276 for details.

June 6th - GHS Floral Art Group, Workshop 2 - Basic  
shape - Hogarth Curve (candlestick/bottle), (16th May).

June 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Leisurely  
circular walk 8 miles / 12.9 km finish 2.30pm Meet  
outside church in St Nicholas-at-Wade. No stiles, hills  
or mud. Bring snacks Contact: Graham, 07989 753278,  
graham.jenkinson@blueyonder.co.uk

June 8th - Wigmore Thursday Club, My Friend Fred and  
'You did What!' Ley Liberson, (see 11th May).

June 9th - UpARA Monthly Meeting, Village Hall,  
2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2, (see 12th May).

June 9th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History  
Society, Members Evening, The North Kent Marshes  
DVD, Visitors welcome (small charge) (see 12th May).

June 10th - Summer Fair, St Paul's Church, Parkwood,  
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June 14th - 17th - The Kentish Players 'Dirty Rotten  
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01634 338338 or www.medwayticketlive.co.uk

June 24th - Meredale Independent School Summer Fayre,  
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June 24th - St Peter's, Bredhurst Summer Fete, 2.00 -  
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