

# ACTION FORUM

OCTOBER 2017  
NUMBER 536

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA



A view of the back of West Moor Farm, Moor Street, Rainham where the Scott family farmed for several generations. In the 1880s Fred Scott, a fan of the sport, organised the last bare-knuckle prize fight to be held in Kent on his land at Meresborough. Bare-knuckle prizefighting is the original form of boxing, closely related to ancient combat sports. It involves two individuals fighting without boxing gloves or other padding on their hands. The sport had been banned in 1882 so this bout was illegal. See David Woods account of the fight on page 9.

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AF

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## Editorial

We are very pleased that the picture on the front of Action Forum last month of the Railway Public House 1970s Football Team stimulated so many memories. A few more names have been added (see page 3) and we hope to be able to supply more once relatives of our correspondents have been consulted. It is often the way that people who have moved away are delighted to reminisce about the happy times they spent in Rainham. Perhaps that is a lesson for us all to appreciate what we have!

Autumn certainly arrived with a bang in September. An early storm played havoc with the fruit that had ripened at least two weeks earlier than usual leaving rings of apples around the trees. The blackberries never lived up to expectations of any kind. I certainly could not find many worth picking, they all seemed small and hard certainly not at all sweet and juicy and have now rotted on the brambles.

Some of our produce in the garden has done remarkably well this year, a fantastic crop of broad beans, potatoes, sweetcorn and raspberries and the courgettes continue to flourish. However our beans have suffered from some kind of fungal attack and are finished whereas we usually expect to go on harvesting a few until either the first frost or November whichever is the sooner. As the storm blasted their poles to an interesting angle perhaps it is just as well and they will be better gone before they collapse completely and smother the parsnips beside them. Gardening is great when everything goes well but so often the weather conspires against us or perhaps we just do not spend enough time cherishing the crops.

The holidays have ended, the days are shortening at an incredible rate and winter is fast approaching so it is time to find new pastimes and hobbies. If you are fed up at home and long for company do try one of the many clubs which we advertise in the diary. Find one you fancy and make a quick phone call to the organiser - that will help you feel if it is right for you, or if you are brave enough just turn up to a meeting and take it from there. Or if none of them appeal you can always start your own group - a letter to Action Forum may well result in like-minded people responding, delighted to find a kindred spirit. Please do read on through our pages and discover what is on offer this month for your entertainment.

We will be here again in November, until then have a very good month.

## Correspondence

### RAINHAM LADIES CHOIR CONCERT

Dear Editor,  
Rainham Ladies Choir will be presenting their next Concert on Saturday 14th October at 7.00 for 7.30pm, Raffle/Programmes in aid of Kent Association for the Blind (K.A.B) will be on sale, The Concert will be performed at the Methodist Church, Third Avenue, Gillingham ME7 2UL. Tickets at £10 (£9 Concessions, under 10yrs Free) are available from 01634 370797 or 01634 613715 or by email from RLCtickets@outlook.com See our website [www.rainhamladieschoir.org.uk](http://www.rainhamladieschoir.org.uk) for more information.

Yours sincerely  
Gwen Woodland

### QUIZ NIGHT

Dear Editor  
Medway Asthma Self-Help (MASH) Quiz Night on Friday 13th October at Roko Gillingham, Watling Street, Gillingham, ME8 6BY. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Tickets are £5 each, teams can be up to eight people and all are most welcome. We will be holding a raffle to raise funds for MASH. All drinks must be bought at the bar but you are welcome to bring snacks. Free parking is available.

Email [medwayasthmahelp@btconnect.com](mailto:medwayasthmahelp@btconnect.com) or contact us on 01634 855844 or visit our website: [www.medwayasthmahelp.co.uk/quiz-night-tickets](http://www.medwayasthmahelp.co.uk/quiz-night-tickets) for more information.

Kind regards  
Fiona Pender (Coordinator)

### THE RAILWAY HOTEL, RAINHAM

Dear Editor,  
My sister recently sent me a copy of September Action Forum. It was good to see that it is still in circulation, unlike so many disappearing memories. I was an evening barmaid at the Railway from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, working opposite shifts with Maxine and alongside Phil. It certainly was the best local in the area and I owed it a great deal for regenerating my social life. This was absolutely down to Doris Clements who transformed the place from the day she and Bob took it over in the early 1960s. Unfortunately, the success of the business didn't really survive Doris's retirement. I haven't seen it recently, but understand that it is in a sorry state. Good luck to Wetherspoons - they can only improve the situation.

Janet (& Alan) Heath  
South Wales  
[janettheath@btinternet.com](mailto:janettheath@btinternet.com)

David Wood apologises to Janet Heath for wrongly naming her as Linda in his article and wishes to clarify that Billy Hales's wife probably should have been described as 'of Mediterranean descent'.

### RAILWAY PUB

Dear Editor,

As a one time regular at the Railway Pub in Rainham I was pleased to see the photo and article in the September issue. I don't actually live in Rainham but have a long association with it. My brother does live in Henry Street and it was he who showed me the copy of Action Forum.

I attended the Medway College of Art from 1958 and got to know another student named Paul Graham and, later, we formed a not very successful rock group which also featured my brother and Andy Tyler. Both Paul and Andy lived in Station Road, Rainham. My brother and I hailed from Wayfield in Chatham and in later years my brother began to use the Railway as his 'local'. I followed suit in 1969 and Bob, the landlord, liked to boast that he had two customers who travelled some distance to enjoy his beer etc.

I think I am correct in saying that the photo of the 'football' team was actually taken at Easter in 1970 and not Boxing Day in 1971. I know this as I am in the picture and only ever played in that game. I have many other reasons for remembering 1970: I was dumped by my (then) girlfriend, failed my driving test on my 27th birthday and also left Mackay's the printers after five years of working there!

I can name some of the unknowns in the photo: Back Row 1. The late Barry Naylor (who was married to barmaid Toni, also deceased) 3. The late John Skinner. 6. Alan Hunt, and front row: 2. Bruce?, 6. (me) Alan Vince, 8. Pete Douglas and 9. my brother Rusty. The photo brings back many happy memories of the Railway but also some sad ones as many of the departed including Billy Higgins and Ron Ward were good friends of my brother and myself, in particular John Skinner and Barry and Toni Naylor.

Yours sincerely  
Alan Vince  
201 Wayfield Road Chatham ME5 0HG  
01634 404971

### RAILWAY PUBLIC HOUSE FOOTBALL TEAM

The photo on the front of Action Forum last month certainly brought back memories to our readers. We have a few names to add to the list and several happy reminiscences of a much loved pub. Gillian Skinner ([gillian.skinner@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:gillian.skinner@blueyonder.co.uk)) and Danny Clout ([danny.clout1949@outlook.com](mailto:danny.clout1949@outlook.com)) identified Barry Naylor, husband of Toni the lady who

was mentioned as working behind the bar and John Skinner. Tom Sears ([hrsears@btinternet.com](mailto:hrsears@btinternet.com)), emailed to say he is seventh from the left and added that he belonged to Breach Rovers and Men of Kent and is now living in Suffolk. He also suggested the names of Jeff (Jesse) Reed/Reid and Johnny Gunner who could be on the picture but recognised Pete Douglas a mate of Maurice Mills.

Susan Hewitt ([sueahewitt@gmail.com](mailto:sueahewitt@gmail.com)) wrote 'I agree The Railway Public House was a very popular pub in the 1970s. My Dad Norman Levett spent a good many years having a few drinks there and had lots of happy memories, he would have known many of the people mentioned. He was good friends with Toni the barmaid & her husband Barry and another friend nicknamed Rusty who frequented the pub. Sadly Norman is dead now but it bought back happy memories of all the time he spent there.'

Thank you everyone who emailed with the information, we are pleased the article revived so many happy memories.

### WE NEED YOU.

Marie Curie appreciates your kindness in supporting the Rainham shop, by donations or shopping, but we do need more volunteers URGENTLY. Please come in to the shop (address below) or telephone the Shop Manager on 01634 387512 to find out more. If you can spare any time it would be invaluable as we are open 7 days a week.

Many thanks  
MARIE CURIE  
15A Shopping Centre, Rainham, ME8 7HW

### POPPIES

Could everyone who has kindly been making poppies for the Poppy Appeal at Hempstead Valley either send them to me or give me a call and I will collect. My address is 6, Arthur Road, Rainham, ME8 9BT 01634 362863. Grateful thanks, Sandra

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*You sent the very person I needed.  
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: October 24th 2017

- October 7th - Brain Tumour Charity Quiz, 7.15 - 10.00pm, Twydale Church Hall, Raffle - Bring your own Food and Drink, Tea/Coffee and Biscuit, 01634 263622
- October 7th - RAMASES Dylan Bickerstaffe will be lecturing on Great expeditions to God's Land and Punt, Newington Village Hall, 2.30pm, £9 guests annette.crowder65@gmail.com or 07476 636803.
- October 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Linton Ramble, 10.00am Moderate circular walk 8.5 miles / 13.7 km finish 2.45pm Meet Linton Church Car Park (Free) Linton Hill (main A229 road), footpath, farmland some road. Some hills. Bring picnic. Pub at end. Contact: John Watts, FLAME451@hotmail.co.uk
- October 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am meet Roger Norman 01634 232404 07941 965272 Aylesford Bailly Bridge Carpark (Free) GR 732588 ME20 7AU 5 1/2 mile walk along the new river pathway from Aylesford to Allington. Mostly flat, long grass, woodland and tracks. 1 Stile. 4 Steps. No Dogs
- October 8th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Get involved by helping with some practical tasks on the site. Meet at the Volunteer Block near the Orchard car park, Ring 01634 338191 for more information
- October 9th - 15th - Making Miracles, Baby Loss Awareness Week, Support for anyone affected by pregnancy loss and the death of a baby. Contact www.makingmiracles.org.uk for more information
- October 9th - 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
- October 9th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, details 01634 230500
- October 9th - Rainham Community Choir at The Howard School 7.00 - 8.30pm. See Face Book or inforainhamcommunitychoir@gmail.com
- October 9th - Medway Towns Bridge Club, Sociable duplicate Bridge each Mon, Tues and Fri, 7.30pm start, St. Luke's Methodist Church Hall, City Way, Rochester ME1 2BQ. £3.50 guests, £2.50 members We can usually find a partner for you on a Monday, 01634 375706, 840094 www.bridgeclubs.com/medwaytowns
- October 9th - Rainham Flower Club, St Matthews Church Hall, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, ME8 0NX Imposed Design & Exhibition 7.30pm, For more information please visit our website www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 864572 / 01634 863034 / 01622 884478
- October 9th - 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.
- October 9th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8 9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Dirkjan Ranzijn, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694
- October 10th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, ME8 0BX In-House Evening Autumn Show, Members £1, Non-members £1.50 New members and visitors always welcome, For details ring 01634 852519
- October 11th - East Medway U3A, Rainham Mark Social Club, 2.00pm, Jack Deans - Finger prints and murder (part II). Guests welcome Cost £2. 07895 890635
- October 11th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,

- Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Recycling - Tom Moore, for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444
- October 12th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Talk "Food for Thought" by Patricia Davey All Saints Church, Hempstead Road 2.00 - 4.00 pm. New members always welcome, phone 07583 343782
- October 12th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, Women Wartime Workers in Munitions Industry, Ann Knief, for over 50s ring 01634 234712 for details.
- October 12th - 14th - 9 To 5: The Musical, 7.30pm, Matinee Saturday 2.30pm Gillingham Dramatic Society Tickets £16 - £17 (adults) £15 (concessions) medwayticketslive.co.uk/ or 01634 338338
- October 13th - 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.
- October 13th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, Byron Primary School ME7 5XX, 7.15pm, The Romans on the Medway - Simon Elliott. Visitors welcome (charge) details see www.grlhs.org or Val Barrand 07947 583327 email lupusrufus@sky.com
- October 13th - Quiz Night, Medway Asthma Self-Help (MASH) Roko, Watling Street, Gillingham, ME8 6BY. 7.30pm start. Tickets £5 each, up to eight people. Raffle, all drinks must be bought at the bar, welcome to bring snacks. Free parking. Contact 01634 855844, email medwayasthmaelfhelp@btconnect.com.
- October 14th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham, 9.00am - 12.30pm, Free entry, Stalls are £10 each contact cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com or ring 07779 366054 for more details
- October 14th - The Big Knit - Making Miracles, 10.00am - 1.00pm, Rochester Cathedral, Help knit 6 x 6 squares. Some wool provided but donations very welcome. Email sally@makingmiracles.org.uk giving names to help us prepare and arrange refreshments.
- October 14th - Patchwork Exhibition, Sewing Together 10th Anniversary Exhibition. Twydale School ME8 6JS 10.00am - 3.00pm. Displays of hand crafted quilts, Demonstration and sales table. Adults £2, children free
- October 14th - Hospital Radio Medway, Quiz, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydale Lane, ME8 6JU 7.30pm Please bring your own drinks and nibbles. Tables of 6-8 book 01634 365300. Tickets £5 per head.
- October 14th - Knowledge & Nibbles Evening, Friends of

- St Margaret's Church, Rainham, Millennium Centre, 7.30pm (prompt). Nibbles provided please bring own drinks & glasses. Tables of 8 - £6 pp. Advance booking essential. Contact Carole 360502 or Lesley 379796.
- October 14th - Rainham Ladies Choir, Concert, 7.30pm, Gillingham Methodist Church, Third Avenue, for Kent Association for Blind, Tickets £10 (£9 Cons, under 10 Free) 01634 370797 or RLCTickets@outlook.com
- October 14th - Muzika Lyra Concert, 7.30pm, St Mary's Church, Newington. Russian Folk Melodies and Songs, Tickets £12, call David Lane 01795 842478 or laneatborden@btinternet.com.
- October 14th - 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.
- October 15th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am meet Harry Keane 01634 231533 07729 356835 The Cock Inn. Car Park. Henley Street. Luddesdown GR 664672 DA13 0XB for 5 1/4 mile undulating and varied walk, using field paths, pastures & woodland tracks with muddy sections. Some gentle but very lengthy slopes. 3 flights of steps, quite challenging (total 50). 10 stiles. No Dogs
- October 15th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Borough Green, 10.00am Leisurely circular walk 8.2 miles / 13.2 km finish 2.30pm Park and meet in Borough Green railway station car park - A227/Wrotham Road. All day £1. TN15 8AJ, TQ608574 via Ightham, Old Soar Manor. Back via Shipbourne Forest / Wealdway and Basted. Approx 900ft of ascent, orchards, pasture and woodland. Contact: Geoff, geoff.rambler@me.com
- October 16th - Rainham Community Choir (see Oct 9th)
- October 16th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St Paul's Church, Parkwood, 7.30pm, Chomp and Chat, All welcome, just come or ring 01634 360797
- October 16th - Wigmore WI meet every 3rd Monday 7.30 - 9.30pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. Interested ring Chris Ellison 01634 372976 or Barbara Strachan 01634 268611
- October 17th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, AGM + Programme planning for 2018, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed, details Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or kayebuss@btinternet.com

Continued on Page 11

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**RAINHAM COMMUNITY CHOIR**  
The Howard School. Mondays 7.00 - 8.30pm term  
time. See Face Book @Rainham Community choir  
or inforainhamcommunitychoir@gmail.com

**RAINHAM SCHOOL for GIRLS**  
David Wood is preparing an article on memories and  
experiences at Rainham School for Girl's during the  
1970s and early 1980s. He has already interviewed  
one lady but needs more information. If you have  
memories you would like to share please contact him  
by email at david3702001@yahoo.co.uk.

**9 TO 5: THE MUSICAL**  
Gillingham Dramatic Society (GDS Productions)  
Thursday 12th - Saturday 14th October, 7.30pm  
Matinee performance Saturday 2.30pm  
With music by Dolly Parton, and a book by Patricia  
Resnick, the musical is based on the Twentieth  
Century Fox movie of the same name. Outrageously  
funny, thought-provoking, and even a little romantic.  
Tickets £16 - £17 (adults) £15 (concessions)  
(offer book 9 tickets, get the 10th free) Buy online at  
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**PATCHWORK EXHIBITION**  
Sewing Together 10th Anniversary Exhibition.  
Saturday 14th October 10.00am - 3.00pm.  
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Twydall School,  
Twydall Lane, Gillingham. ME8 6JS  
Entrance £2 children free.

**KNOWLEDGE & NIBBLES EVENING**  
Friends of St Margaret's Church, Rainham  
Millennium Centre, Gatekeeper Chase  
Saturday 14th October, 7.30pm (prompt).  
Nibbles provided, bring your own drinks & glasses.  
Tables of 8 - £6 per person  
Advance booking essential.  
Contact Carole 360502 or Lesley 379796.

**QUIZ**  
Hospital Radio Medway  
Saturday 14th October, 7.30pm  
Holy Trinity Church Hall  
Twydall Lane, Gillingham ME8 6JU  
Please bring your own drinks and nibbles.  
Tickets are £5 per head.  
Tables of 6 - 8 can be booked on  
01634 365300 with Eunice Norman.

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**WOW A "CHARITY AUCTION"**  
St Mary Magdalene Church, Gillingham  
In aid of the Re-Ordering Project Appeal  
Sunday 17th September, 2.00 - 5.00pm  
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Refreshments, Free entry, park Saxon Way School  
Further information ring Hilda 01634 932135

**CRAFT AND GIFT FAYRE**  
In aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital  
Saturday 28th October, 11.00am - 2.00pm.  
St Matthews Church Hall, Gillingham  
Ideal opportunity to start thinking about Christmas!  
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07930 595856 or Stacey 07897 007979

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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES

In early September of last year, I visited Scotney Castle Estate, which is near Tunbridge Wells and which is owned by the National Trust. In particular, I went on a guided tour of the estate's Little Scotney Farm, which is a mixed one. The tenant, Ian Strang, raises beef cattle and sheep and grows wheat and hops. Most unusually, he dries his hops in his three traditional oast houses. Our guide led us along a drive towards the farm, through parkland dotted with oak and other trees, among which sheep and red Sussex beef cattle were grazing. Also feeding there was a mixed flock of rooks and jackdaws and migrating swallows. I could hear the call of a green woodpecker, which was doubtless in search of the yellow meadow ants that live in large, grass covered anthills. In the ancient hedge alongside the drive, I noted rose hips and the berries of hawthorn, elder, bramble, bryony and holly. They were a sure sign of autumn. In due course we came to the farm, which is typically Kentish, consisting mainly of red brick buildings with peg tile roofs. There is an 18th century wooden framed barn, with a hipped roof and tarred clapping, which serves as a maternity unit at lambing time. A large, modern, open shed in the middle of the yard houses the beef cattle in the winter. There is a long row of loose boxes which house riding horses. It being a Saturday, a number of young ladies were to be seen mucking out their horses. Finally, there are three round oast houses, built in the 1870s, with an adjoining shed, erected in the 1950s, and containing bine stripping machinery. This replaced the picking of the hop cones, carried out, by hand, by generations of hop pickers who sat in the hop gardens. Hens, cockerels and an assortment of terriers run freely throughout the farm yard. It was good to see a flock of houses sparrows on the farm. They presumably feed on the seeds in the hay given to the horses. Little Scotney Farm is in an idyllic spot. It sits between the Rivers Teise and Bewl, both of which are tributaries of the River Medway. From the high ground of the farm there is a view over both the farm's own hop garden and the neighbouring Finchcock hop

garden. Also in view are the rag stone towers of Horsmonden and Goudhurst parish churches. One could not imagine a more Kentish scene. Leaving the farm yard for later in our visit, we headed for the hop garden. Five varieties of hops are grown at Little Scotney, the main one being "Target". It is the aromatic, female flowers of the hop that develop into the greenish yellow cones that are used in brewing. They clarify the beer, help it to keep longer and give it a bitter flavour. The bines and the string around which the bines have climbed are cut down by hand, which is a strenuous and dusty job. They are carried to the stripping shed in a procession of narrow trailers hauled by three diminutive Massey Ferguson tractors of 1960s vintage.

In the shed the bines are fixed onto hooks dangling from a continuous metal chain which conveys the bines to a stripping machine. This separates the cones from the stems and leaves of the bines. The process is very noisy and dusty. The cones are then conveyed to one of the three oast houses where they are spread over cloth laid on top of a slatted drying floor. They are then slowly dried by means of oil burners and subsequently packed into large sacks (or pokes) for conveying to the brewers. About half of the hops are sold to a large London brewer and the rest to a variety of mini-brewers, including Westerham Brewery Company, which makes Little Scotney Pale Ale, among other beers. Our guide told us that nearly all of the people working in the hop garden and on the farm, which were a mixture of men and women, young and elderly, lived locally. During our time in the stripping shed and the oast houses, the workers were sitting down together and eating their lunches. As we filed past them, apologies were made for our intrusion but the workers seemed relaxed about our presence.

We stopped briefly to admire the front gardens of two farm workers' semi detached cottages. I spotted, among other flowers, Michaelmas daisies, roses, dahlias and hollyhocks, the latter of which had long gone to seed. The hollyhock, growing against a cottage wall, is the archetypal plant of the English cottage garden. A robin gave out a somewhat melancholy song as it perched on a washing line. We were finally taken to see two terraces of hoppers' huts, each ten

foot square. They were in any idyllic spot, in Broadham Wood, among heather and foxgloves and alongside the River Bewl, from where the hoppers obtained their water. The huts were discretely hidden away, so as not to be seen by the former estate owners in the big house. Today the big house is owned by the National Trust, whose members are prepared to pay good money for a guided tour to see the hoppers' huts.

Joe Ennis

## THE RAINHAM PRIZE FIGHT

Prize fighting proved very popular during the 18th and 19th centuries but the law changed in 1882 and the sport was banned, so future fights took place illegally. Fred Scott who farmed at Meresborough became a fan of prize fighting and staged the last ever bare knuckle fight in Kent with the assistance of his brother Robert. On May 18th 1888 he arranged a fight at his farm between two well-known London fighters Alec Roberts from Shoreditch and Jem Hayes from Paddington, fought under London prize ring rules for £400 a side. Because the fight was illegal it had to be staged secretly in the early morning hours.

E P Fay of the 'Clarion,' went to Rainham from London to report on the fight. While travelling on the midnight train he met a group of well-known gentlemen that included a peer, a racehorse owner and a bookmaker all on their way to the same fight although they made out that they did not know each other. They got into four carriages outside Chatham railway station and set off for Rainham at 1.15am. When E P Fay and accompanying gentlemen arrived at Meresborough they were met by Fred Scott who escorted them to the first floor of his big barn where two long tables laden with huge amounts of meat, vegetables and barrels of Kentish ale were placed. A problem arose when Rainham police-constable Barranger arrived to find out what was happening. He had been awakened by the clattering of the horse drawn coaches passing through Rainham. Fred Scott informed Barranger that a smoking concert was taking place and invited him to have a drink. Fred Scott then supplied him with brandy and ale causing him to become intoxicated and to fall asleep on the floor. Meanwhile, as more gentlemen arrived they were taken to the barn where they ate, drank, sang and were entertained by a famous London actor who recited part of Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice.'

At about 4 am the guests were led to a three cornered

field at Fardon's Corner situated about ten minutes from the farmhouse. Stakes were knocked into the ground then ropes attached to make a fighting ring. With the spectators waiting the two fighters arrived. Alec Roberts, the champion of his weight had never been defeated. At 4.20 am the fight began which Fay described:

*'For fully a minute the men circled round, viewing each other's points with the stealthy step of the tiger about to spring; and then Roberts darted at his man, and, with his left arm going out like a flash, smote Hayes on the jawbone...The supporters of the rival combatants screamed and yelled like frantic demons.'* After the first two rounds Hayes took the lead and after 20 rounds he still looked strong but then the fight dramatically changed when he swung a powerful right punch but instead of hitting Roberts he struck a stake which disabled his right arm for the remainder of the fight, but he incredibly fought on for a further 44 rounds.

During the last 30 minutes Fay reported that the fighters became exhausted until Hayes lay down on the floor in the 64th round unable to rise leaving Roberts as the winner.

After the contest which had lasted for 1 hour 47 minutes, the police arrived to investigate but they were unable to find any evidence as the spectators had left, the rope hidden and the stakes destroyed.

Alec Roberts and many spectators left for London on the early morning train from Chatham, while defeated fighter Jem Hayes recovered in bed. He had to wait until night to travel, disguised and escorted by friends, as the police were watching the local railway stations for people suspected of attending the fight.

According to the 'Clarion' Rainham police-constable Barranger was suspended from duty then later discharged from the force. Some spectators who had attended the fight raised a substantial amount of money for him as compensation.

In July 1888 Fred Scott, the fighters and organisers were summoned to Sittingbourne Petty Sessions and charged with causing a riot and committing assault. They were then sent to the East Kent Quarter Sessions in Canterbury in October 1888 and were bound over to keep the peace after a lengthy trial. Finally, prize fighting declined in England and gave way to the rise and popularity of boxing from the mid-1890s.

David Wood.

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## Diary 2017

October 17th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,  
Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.45  
pm £3.50. Trinidad and Tobago: Home of the  
Hummingbird - Ashley Grove For Field Trips:  
www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

October 18th - 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

October 18th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Village Hall,  
7.30pm, Nigel Gibson 'A Year in a Cobham Garden',  
Bring and Buy Produce Stall, New members always  
welcome, ring 07791 781 910 for details

October 19th - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 -  
4.00pm. Speaker on 'Ups & Downs of a Wedding  
Photographer' Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community  
Centre, Rainham. Visitors welcome for small entry  
charge per visit. Ring 01634 366276 for details.

October 19th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Musical  
Entertainment, In Harmony (see 12th Oct).

October 19th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, scrabble,  
board games, tea and chat (see 12th Oct)

October 20th - Hempstara Whist Afternoon, 1.30pm start,  
The Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead,  
Whist players of all abilities welcome, a partner is not  
required, for details please ring Eunice 01634 231664  
October 20th - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club,  
Darland Avenue, 8.00pm, Alan Barnes Band- plays a  
tribute to Eddie Condon featuring Alan Barnes on saxes  
and clarinet, Enrico Tomasso trumpet, Ian Bateman  
trombone with a top class rhythm section. Admission  
£12, Enquiries 01634 365352 or 07544 312743.

October 21st - Rainham Flower Club, 2.00pm, Newington  
Village Hall, High Street, ME9 7JJ Open Meeting  
Demonstration by Coral Gardiner 'Natures Autumn  
Palette' Tickets £10 (includes tea and cake) details  
www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or 01634 864572

October 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, Chartham  
Village, 10.00am Leisurely circular walk 5 miles / 8.1  
km finish 12.45pm Park courteously in village meet at  
recreation ground. CT4 7LA, TR107551 via Larkey  
Valley Wood and nature reserve up Chartham Downs to  
Garlinge Green and downhill to start. Contact: Tony/  
Ann, 01634 406634, vajra.faulkner@tesco.net

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October 22nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am meet Anne Bond / Pat Wells 07778 302866  
07804 837155 Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park.  
Bysing Wood Road. Faversham GR000623 ME13 7UD  
Toilets & Tea / Coffee available Gates open approx  
9.45. Do Not use carpark spaces but area inside gates 5  
½ mile undulating walk. 5 Stiles. Dogs Allowed

October 23rd - 29th - Free Half Term Halloween  
Activities, Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre,  
11.00am - 3.00pm daily, Free Admission, Free Parking  
www.hempsteadvalley.com

October 23rd - Monday Hub, (see 9th Oct).

October 23rd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 9th Oct).

October 24th - Tree Walk, Capstone Farm Country Park,  
10.00am - 12noon, £3 per child, suitable for the whole  
family, Ring 01634 338191 for more information

October 25th - Pumpkin Carving, Capstone Farm  
Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon, £3 per child, suitable  
for the whole family, Ring 01634 338191 for details.

October 25th - Rainham Historical Society, Millennium  
Hall, Rainham, 7.30pm, History of Papermaking. All  
welcome, Contact secretary 01634 366276 for details.

October 25th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, 7.15pm,  
Speaker - Kent Food and Wine, Refreshments and  
Quiz, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road,  
Gillingham, Details Sandie 07962 277330

October 25th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,  
Hempstead, The Making of a Style Icon - Helen  
Kendall-Tobias, (see 11th Oct).

October 26th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting,  
(see 12th Oct).

October 26th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Talk "Eve's  
Stained Glass" (see 12th Oct)

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

October 27th - Medway Geographical Society, 7.30, Paul  
Warren - Treasures of Japan, Holy Trinity Church,  
Twydall Lane, Gillingham ME8 6TN, all welcome, just  
come or ring Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

October 28th - Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm  
start, Twydall Church Hall, Tickets £5 each, Tables 6-8  
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## Diary 2017

October 28th - St Margaret's Bazaar, 10.00am - 2.00pm,  
Millennium Centre Rainham Donations welcome at the  
Millennium Centre on Friday 27th October.  
October 28th - Applause Rural Touring Scheme,  
Bredhurst Village Hall ME7 3JZ, 7.30pm start, Tickets  
at £10 from Ann Keeble, 01634 361263  
October 28th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 14th Oct).  
October 29th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am meet Doreen Maguire 01634 376230  
Sevenoaks, Buckhurst Lane, Leisure Centre, Car Park.  
(Fee) GR 532547 TN13 1LW for 5 mile walk through  
Knole Park. Including using roads, tracks, grassland  
and through woods. No Stiles, Dogs Allowed on lead  
October 29th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Harrietsham -  
(Long 10 miles or Short 5.5 miles), 10.00am Moderate  
circular walk finish 3.30pm ME17 1AH, TQ867525 A  
circular walk with good views from top of the hill.  
Derek, 07768 448633, derek.kent@blueyonder.co.uk  
November 2nd - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist,  
scrabble, board games, tea and chat (see 12th Oct)  
November 3rd - Rainham Bereavement Friendship  
Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham (see 13th Oct).  
November 4th - Winter Wonderland, St Matthew's  
Church, Drewery Drive, Wigmore 11.00am - 3.00pm,  
Admission Free!  
November 4th - Fun Evening of Music and Songs, The  
Kingfisher Singers, 7.30pm St Margaret's Church,  
Rainham, Tickets £7 on the door, refreshments included  
In aid of H.L.P.S Children with Orthopaedic problems.  
November 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Rochester to  
Wouldham, 10.00am Moderate circular walk 11 miles /  
17.7 km finish 4.00pm Meet at Rochester Railway  
Station. ME1 1NH public car parks nearby. TQ745685  
Pleasant walk crossing bridges and along the River  
Medway to Wouldham, very steep climb to top of the  
North Downs for picnic lunch, then descent and back  
through Rochester, pubs and cafes. Contact: Chris,  
01634 360270, chris.strachan@live.com  
November 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,

10.00am meet Andy Boorman 07881 933358 Lynsted.  
The Street, Black Lion PH. GR 943608 ME9 0JS Park  
considerately near pub for 5 Mile Historic walk  
undulating using roads, fields, grassland and woodland  
passing through Rodmersham. 6 Stiles. Dogs Allowed  
November 5th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day,  
Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Get  
involved by helping with some practical tasks on the  
site. Meet at the Volunteer Block near the Orchard car  
park, Ring 01634 338191 for more information  
November 6th - Monday Hub, (see 9th Oct).  
November 6th - Medway Scramble Club, (see 9th Oct).  
November 6th - Medway Towns Bridge Club, (9th Oct).  
November 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm,  
A Year in a Cobham Garden - Nigel Gibson, Rainham  
Crickit Club, Berengrave Lane, Rainham. New  
members welcome, ring 366276 for details.  
November 7th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Gun Powder  
Plot' - a vertical arrangement, (see 17th Oct).  
November 8th - East Medway U3A, Toni Mount 'They  
Dared to be Doctors' the fascinating story of the first  
Victorian ladies to succeed in a man's world. (11th Oct)  
November 11th - Grand Christmas Charity Bazaar, St  
Matthew's Community Centre, Wigmore, 10.30am -  
12.30pm refreshments, free parking, entrance 20p all  
proceeds to charity, information Linda 01634 377267  
email: linalisgarten@hotmail.co.uk  
November 11th - Upchurch Choral Society 'A Flower  
Remembered' 7.30pm, St. Mary's Church, Upchurch,  
commemorating the day the Armistice was signed.  
Tickets £5, collection in aid of the British Legion.  
November 18th - Oast Community Centre, Christmas Fair  
in aid of the Oast building fund 10.00am - 1.00pm. For  
more information contact Heather Woodgate email  
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November 18th - Craft Market Smallholders club. 2  
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