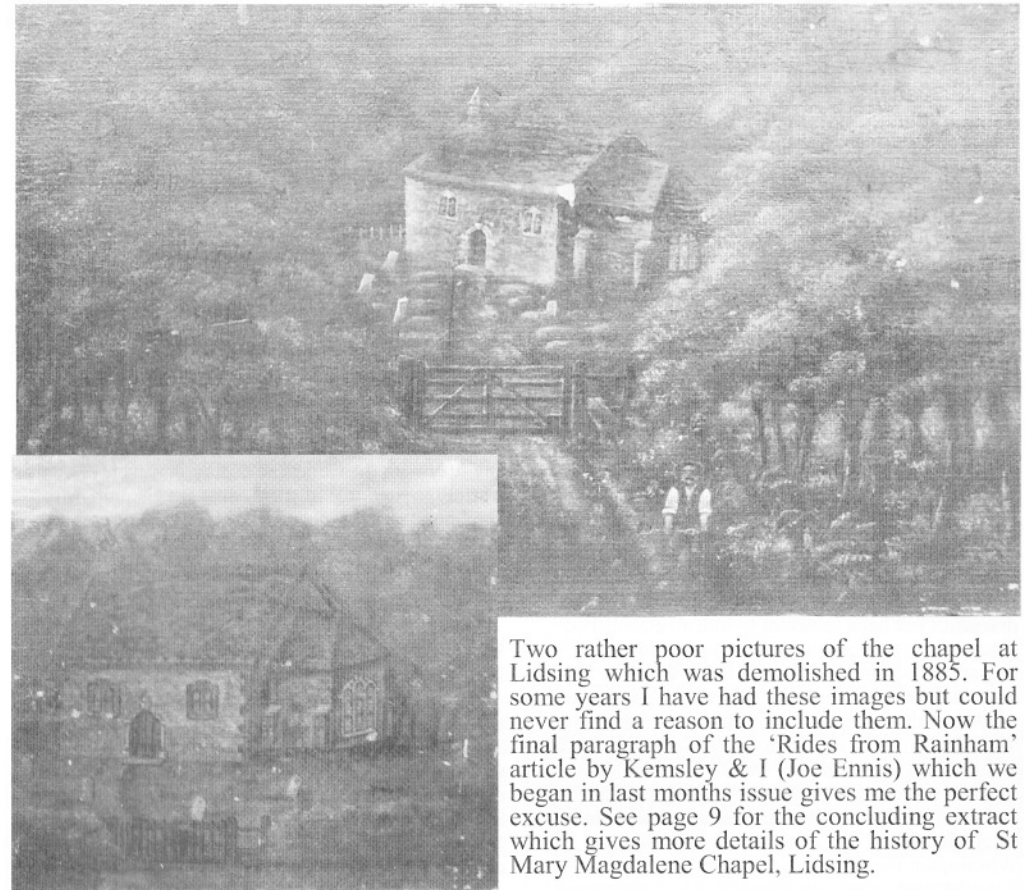


ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

MARCH 2018
NUMBER 540



Two rather poor pictures of the chapel at Lidsing which was demolished in 1885. For some years I have had these images but could never find a reason to include them. Now the final paragraph of the 'Rides from Rainham' article by Kemsley & I (Joe Ennis) which we began in last month's issue gives me the perfect excuse. See page 9 for the concluding extract which gives more details of the history of St Mary Magdalene Chapel, Lidsing.

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AF Next Issue April 7th 2018
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Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller
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Editorial

Winter drags on and we seem to be enduring a succession of cold, damp days. At least we have had a respectable amount of rainfall since Christmas so hopefully we will avoid the dark predictions of 'hose pipe bans' this summer but with the ever increasing house building programmes in our immediate vicinity we are going to need more and more water for the foreseeable future. On a more cheerful note spring is just around the corner. The first glimpse of new life is emerging and already snowdrops abound in glorious displays. Apparently already in 2018 unusually high numbers of flowers have been counted by keen observers who volunteer to submit monthly records in order that the changing seasons can be recorded by Plantlife. Daily or weekly jottings have long been a hobby for many who enjoy nature watching. The phenomenal publishing success of Edith Holden's 1905 'Nature Notes of an Edwardian Lady' was just one example and I am sure many families have their own, possibly not as elaborate, notebooks and lists of different facts and figures.

Have you ever wanted to be involved with amateur dramatics but been reluctant to join an established group? Well now is your chance to be in from the beginning as some residents in Hempstead are hoping to start a new society. They need volunteers for all aspects of drama from scene shifter to wardrobe assistant and of course actors. If you are interested do go along to the meeting on March 12th to find out more. If however you prefer to just enjoy a polished performance the Oasthouse Theatre in Rainham is staging 'Ladies Day' a comedy by Amanda Whittington for two of their usual Thursday to Saturday runs in the middle of March. Tickets are available from the Box Office on 08448 793224 or www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

As in previous years we are again able to donate surplus funds from the production of Action Forum to charity, saved by our wonderful army of volunteer distributors. £2,000 has been given to St Margaret's Church, Rainham and the Parish of South Gillingham in Wigmore and a further £2,000 to Tools with a Mission who recondition unwanted tools and sewing machines for use in Africa. This brings the total donated since September 2000 when we returned to volunteer distribution to £56,550. A combination of old age and illness means that several of our very long

standing distributors have been forced to give up their rounds. If you have an hour or so to spare each month and like a walk with a purpose please do look at the list on page 3 of roads that need cover, I would be delighted to receive an email or phone call from you! If you ring please mention it is Action Forum you are enquiring about. It can get confusing as it is The Net office who will answer and pass on the message to me. Incredible as it may seem a quarter of the year and Easter will have gone by April 7th when the next Action Forum is published so do have a Very Happy Easter and enjoy the spring in all its glory until we are with you again. Have a good month!

Correspondence

2nd RAINHAM GUIDES CELEBRATE
Dear Editor

We are delighted to announce that 2nd Rainham Guides attain their 70th birthday this year. After the first meeting in May 1948, held in the old school at the top of Station Road, the company was registered in June that year. The first Captain was Joan List, assisted by her sister Margaret who taught at the school. Later Sheila Mann, also a teacher but at Rainham School for Girls, took on the role of Captain. We hope to celebrate this happy occasion with a party in the summer. Anyone who has been associated in any way with the Company during its seventy years is warmly invited to contact the present Captain, Mrs Daphne Stearn, by phone 01634 232598 or email m_stearn@sky.com who will be delighted to keep them updated with the relevant information.

Yours sincerely
Daphne Stearn

RETURNING AM DRAM TO HEMPSTEAD
Dear Editor,

A group of us in Hempstead are hoping to bring back an Am Dram Society to the village. To do so we need help. We are looking for Actors, Back Stage, Committee Members and Front of House personnel therefore we are holding an Open Meeting in All Saints Church, Hempstead Road, Hempstead on Monday March 12th at 7.45pm. Please come and join us. Share your ideas on what you would like to emerge, and hopefully play a part in bringing Amateur Dramatics back to Hempstead.

We will be providing some refreshments too!
For more information please email us on hempamdram@gmail.com and let us you are coming but you can just pop into the meeting on the night. See you there.

Yours faithfully
Tina Venus-Coppard

DOG TRAINING CLASSES.
Lower Halstow Memorial/Village Hall,
Starting on Saturday 27th January
For more information please contact
Rachel rachelwoollven@hotmail.co.uk.

QUIZ NIGHT
Dear Editor

The Inner Wheel Club of Gillingham is holding a Quiz at Upchurch River Valley Golf Club Restaurant on Friday April 6th 2018 at 6.30 for 7.00pm sharp. The tickets are £10 each which includes a Chicken & Chips supper. Tables of 6 or 8. Proceeds to our Presidents Charity 'Porchlight'. Please contact Secretary Rosemarie Barnes on 07547 250010 or rosemarie.barnes777@gmail.com to apply for tickets.

WISDOM HOSPICE

The Friends Hempstead Valley Stall
Monday 26th February - Sunday 4th March
The Friends will once again be selling a range of goodies, including our Easter Knitted Treats. Visit us for some bargains! If you would like to volunteer on our stall, please contact The Friends on 01634 831163 or email info@fowh.org.uk

BEEKEEPING COURSE

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Syllabus follows British Beekeepers' Association.
To be held from 10.00am - 12noon on
Saturdays for 10 weeks commencing
February 24th at The Oast Community Centre,
next to Rainham Station.
Further details from Pat & Terry Clare
010634 233748 or patclare89@me.com

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday 2nd March, 2.00pm
St. Thomas' Church, London Road, Rainham
The service for the world day of prayer has this year been prepared by the women of Suriname on the theme 'All God's creation is very good'
Everyone is very welcome to come and join the worship and prayer

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COMMUNITY CHEST PROJECT

The Rotary Club of Medway invite applications from local charities, groups, projects etc in Medway to bid for sums of money from £50 minimum to £250. Any charities/groups interested please download a Community Chest application form from the website www.medwayrotary.org.uk (printed copies available from Mike Williams 01634 253598).

Please note the requirements: applicants should be non-profit making, preferably a registered charity and have a bank account in the name of the group. The request is for a specific item. (This can be a distinct part of a larger project). Closing date for completed forms is 16th April 2018 please email to info@medwayrotary.org.uk Successful applicants will be invited to the Rotary Presentation Evening meeting 29th May 2018 to receive the award.

DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors are needed for:
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Collett, Moyle, Lubbock Closes
Woollaston, Warlingham, Wildman Closes
Wigmore
Top Wigmore Road & Fowler Close
Fairview Avenue
Central Maidstone Road (Deanwood to Fairview)
Woodpecker Glade
Hempstead
Meadowdown, Thistledown, Tamarind, Mulberry, Wildwood, Black Rock, Stalham, Coppice Court
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Diary 2018

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 27th 2018

February 24th - Applause Rural Touring Theatre, Bredhurst Village Hall, 7.30pm. 'Think of England'. Tickets £10 from Ann Keeble, 01634 361263

February 25th - Rainham Radio Rally 36th Year, 10.00am Victory Academy, Magpie Hall Rd, Chatham, ME4 5JB. Adults £2.50, Children Free www.brats-qth.org

February 25th - Indoor Boot Fair, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Twydale Community Centre, 50p entry. Details pinkdukebox@aol.com or ring 7809 892883

February 26th - March 4th - Friends of Wisdom Hospice Hempstead Valley Stall, volunteers 01634 831163

February 28th - Rainham Historical Society, Millennium Hall, 7.30pm Building Rochester Cathedral, All welcome, Olwen O'Dowd 01634 263622 for details.

February 28th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, A Swipe at the 70s - Alan Haines, details Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

March 1st - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, History of the Hovercraft - Brian Laverick-Smith, for over 50s ring 01634 234712

March 2nd - 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 2nd - Games Afternoon, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall, 2.00 - 4.00pm, £1.50 includes a cuppa, biscuits and a warm welcome.

March 2nd - Women's World Day of Prayer, 2.00pm, St. Thomas' Church, London Road, service prepared by the women of Suriname 'All God's creation is very good', all welcome to join the worship and prayer

March 2nd - Ladies Pamper Evening, Medway Asthma Self-Help (MASH), 6.00pm Gillingham Golf Club. Tickets £3 in advance, £4 on the door. Treatments from £5, pay stall holders. Details 01634 855844

March 2nd - Gillingham Horticultural Society, 7.00 for 7.15pm AGM United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham ME7 4PU, £2 Members £3 Non Members, details Call Sandie 07962 277330

March 3rd - Quiz Night, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall, 7.30pm, Tickets £6 pp includes Ploughman's Supper, call Kay 01795 844408, bring your own Beverage

March 3rd - 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.

March 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Moderate circular walk 6.5 miles / 10.5 km, estimated finish 1.30pm, Birling Ramble, Meet and park in the car park behind Birling Church. ME19 5JG. Contact: Ade, 01634 306405, adeballard@yahoo.co.uk

March 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Leisurely circular walk 6 miles / 9.7 km, estimated finish 2.30pm, Borden & Kent Wild Life Trust meet Maypole Inn

ME9 8JN TQ882629 meet Martin Keelor, Kent Wild Life Trust, in Cromer's wood. Contact: Tony/Ann, 01634 406634, vajra.faulkner@tesco.net

March 4th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Roger Norman 01634 232404 07941 965272 Marden Library Car Park GR745447 TN12 9DP for 5 Mile very flat walk, steps to railway. No Dogs

March 4th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Meet at the visitor centre, Ring 01634 337432 for more information

March 5th - Medway Scramble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, details 01634 230500

March 5th - 11th - Hempstead Valley's Mother's Day Gift Fayre www.hempsteadvalley.com

March 6th - Breast Cancer Support Group, Medway Hospital, Level 2, Area 7, 7.00 - 9.00pm. A demonstration of 'Pilates' with Tina, details Angela Blackwell 01634 861802 or 07761 853750

March 6th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm, Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Caroline Halfpenny - The Gardens of Cornwall. New members welcome, details from 01634 366276.

March 6th - GHS Floral Art Group, 7.30 - 9.00pm, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, "Mothering Sunday" - hand tied arrangement, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed. Just come for a friendly welcome. Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

March 7th - Bird Walk, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 12.00noon, Join a ranger on a gentle walk identifying the most common birds seen or heard along the estuary. £3 Adults only, 01634 337432 for more information

March 8th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Jewels of Japan - Paul Warren, (see 1st Mar).

March 9th - Local History Society, Byron Primary School, Gillingham, ME7 5XX, 7.15pm - Talk Martin Heard 'Gardens at Versailles', details Val Barrand 07947 583327 or visit website www.grlhs.org

March 9th - Community Games Evening, Lower Halstow Village Hall ME9 7EZ, 7.00pm - 9.00pm, Families and individuals welcome, £2 each at door, refreshments.

March 9th - Donn Barcott Band 'Five Live', 8.00pm, Brompton Conservative Club, High Street, Licensed Bar, Quality Raffle, Light Snacks, Phone 01634 405037

March 10th - Craft Market, 9.00am - 12.30pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham Free entry, Refreshments, To book a stall (£10 each) ring 07779 366054 or email cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com

March 10th - Barn Dance, St. Mary's Church, Newington, 7.30pm, Village Hall, £8 pp, includes ploughman's supper, Limited bar, To book call David Lane 01795 842478, In aid of St Mary's Church General Fund

March 11th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Brian Gevaux 01634 235883 Camer Country Park Meopham. GR 650670 DA13 0AL for 5 mile walk, parts of walk are hilly with kissing gates. Dogs Allowed

March 11th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Leisurely circular walk 7 miles / 11.3 km, estimated finish 2.00pm, Lynsted Meet at The Black Lion, The Street, Lynsted ME9 0JS Park considerably TQ942609 Bring picnic or pub at end serves food. Contact: Len, 01634 319391, lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk

March 11th - 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 visitor centre, Ring 01634 338191 for information

March 12th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham meets 2nd Monday each month to help those still in employment who have lost a loved one. Join us for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.

March 12th - Rainham Flower Club, St Matthews Church Hall, Wigmore, 7.30pm, Workshop 'Floral Madness' Tutored by Helen Hare, experienced and novices welcome, give us a try. www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 863034 / 01634 373928 / 01795 843180

March 12th - Open Meeting to discuss new Am Dram Society in Hempstead, 7.45pm, All Saints Church, Hempstead, email hempamdram@gmail.com

March 12th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8 9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Chris Stanbury, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694

March 13th - Gillingham and District Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, ME8 0BX. 'Workshop' meeting demonstrations and questions enquiries 01634 852519.

March 13th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, 8.00pm, St. George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 'Uncovering the Treasures of Bruges' Mrs Melanie Gibson-Barton, details 01634 851512 or just turn up

March 14th - East Medway U3A Rainham Social Club, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Andrew Freeman 'The Story of Rochester Bridge', non-members welcome. Free to members, £2 for visitors. See www.eastmedwayu3a

March 14th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm, Village Hall, Colin Brown speaking on 'Ordinance Survey - Ancient and Modern.' More details, Pam Ormiston 01634 365789

March 14th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, 8.00pm, Fund Raising, (see 28th Feb).

March 15th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Birthday Tea with Entertainment from Harmony, (see 1st Mar).

March 15th - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 - 4.00pm. Members Meeting Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community Centre, Granary Close, Visitors welcome for small entry charge. Ring 01634 366276 for details.

March 15.16.17.22.23.24 Oasthouse Theatre 'Ladies Day'. A comedy by Amanda Whittington, Curtain up 8.00pm. Box Office 0844 8793224 or on-line www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

March 17th - Charity Coffee Morning / Cake Sale, for Oliver Fisher Baby Trust and 20th Gillingham (Hempstead) Air Scouts 10.00am - 1.00pm Scout HQ, Dukes Meadow Drive, Free Entry, cakes welcome.

March 17th - Spring Concert, Rochester Choral Society, 7.00pm, Rochester Cathedral, Tickets: £15 (nave); £7 (restricted) £5 (students) from 01634 401049 or online www.rochesterchoral.co.uk/tickets

March 17th - Alternate Shadows For Whom the Bell Tolls Murder Mystery Newington Village Hall 7.30pm, Tickets £6 pp in Advance BYO Drinks and Nibbles, 01634 360906 or mikew16@blueyonder.co.uk

March 17th - Charity Quiz - Bloodwise, 7.30pm, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, Tickets £5 each (Tables of 6) Contact Dot 01634 864642

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LADIES PAMPER EVENING
Medway Asthma Self-Help (MASH)
Friday 2nd March, 6.00pm
Gillingham Golf Club.

Tickets are £3 in advance or £4 on the door.
Range of pampering treatments including massage,
reflexology and manicure from as little as £5 per
treatment (payment direct to stall holders) and at
help raise money for your local asthma charity.
To pre-book entry tickets or if you are interested in
having a stall please contact 01634 855844,
email medwayasthmasefhelp@btconnect.com or
www.medwayasthmasefhelp.co.uk

QUIZ NIGHT
Lower Halstow Memorial/Village Hall
Saturday 3rd March, 7.00pm for 7.30
Tickets £6 per person includes a
Ploughman's Supper.
Please bring your own Beverage
Tickets and information call Kay 01795 844408

COMMUNITY GAMES EVENING
Lower Halstow Village Hall ME9 7EZ
Friday 9th March, 7.00pm - 9.00pm
(And every second Friday of each month)

Families with 16 year olds and under, single young
adults of 16+, and adults, are eligible to join us.
Games Include: Chess (to a medium standard),
Rummikub, Euchre, Domino's, Cluedo, Whist,
Skip Bow, Checkers. We have all these games
available, but feel free to bring others not mentioned.
(Bridge (could be too noisy), and any game which
involves money will be deemed unsuitable.)
No Joining Fee, just £2 per person on the night.
Discount for families of four or more includes
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OASTHOUSE THEATRE
'Ladies Day'. A comedy by Amanda Whittington
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Life is one long, hard slog for the fish-filleting
foursome Pearl, Jan, Shelley and Linda. But their
fortunes are set to change when they head to Ladies'
Day at Royal Ascot. Factory hairnets make way for
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unforgettable day out.
Secrets are spilled with the champagne and
friendships are tested to the limit. Yet as the day
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In aid of The Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Trust
& 20th Gillingham (Hempstead) Air Scout Group
Saturday 17th March, 10.00am – 1.00pm
Scout HQ, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead
Help us change lives with a cup of tea
and a slice of cake! All Invited. Free Entry
Donations of cakes welcome.

CHARITY QUIZ - BLOODWISE
Saturday 17th March
Doors open 7pm - starting at 7.30pm
Parkwood Community Centre
Tickets £5 each (Tables of 6)
Contact Dot on 01634 864642

BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY QUIZ
www.braintumourcharity.org
Saturday 24th March, 7.15pm – 10.00pm
Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall Lane
Tea and Coffee and biscuits in interval
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY

January is, statistically, the coldest month of the year, although that has not proved to be the case in 2018. For wild birds, extremely cold, wintery weather, whenever it comes, poses two main threats. Firstly, loss of bodily heat can be as killer, especially for small birds. Secondly, snow and ice can make it hard for most birds to find natural food. It is often February, rather than January, when the cumulative effects of snow or ice leads to the severest food shortages for wild birds. Furthermore, by the second month of the year, whatever the weather, food resources such as berries, fruit, nuts and seeds are diminishing fast and it is too early for the emergence, in spring, of caterpillars and other invertebrates. I write below about the typical ten top species recorded in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch. Although house sparrows persistently appear at the very top of the lists in the annual Birdwatch, their numbers have declined dramatically over the years, particularly in urban areas. House sparrows live in small colonies, and if they cannot keep up their numbers, perhaps because of lack of nesting sites or food (particularly insects and grubs for their young) the colony gradually dies out. The RSPB encourages householders to put up three or more nesting boxes for the birds. Starling numbers are also down, probably due to lack of invertebrates such as worms and grubs in fields and lawns. In the event of snow or ice they may be able to feed on the last remaining hawthorn, holly or other wild berries. If severe winter weather persists, they may move west to Ireland or south to Spain.

Great, blue and long tailed tits find it hard to get at insects and insect eggs in the branches and twigs of trees when they are sealed by ice. These birds have however adapted very successfully to pecking at peanuts and fat balls. Once the birds get to know that food is regularly available in a particular garden, they will make a point of stopping off there in their daily circuit around the neighbourhood. Even when members of the tit family travel some distance from their native wood to find food in gardens, they generally fly back to that wood to roost at night.

Outside the breeding season, great, blue and long tailed tits may be seen in mixed flocks of another species of tit such as coal and marsh tit. Great tits, although not so often as blue tits, will come down to the ground in gardens. Great tits are used to feeding under beech trees on fallen beech nuts (masts). Great tits are dominant over all other tit species but blue tits are often well able to hold their own with their bigger relative and are also, in turn, often notably aggressive to other, smaller tits such as long tailed, coal and marsh tit. The blue tit is one of our favourite birds due to its willingness not only to feed on our bird tables but also to nest in the boxes we put up for them. Long tailed tits are usually seen in flocks of never less than about six members of an extended family. This gives them a better warning against a surprise attack by a sparrow hawk. They are creatures of habit, plying a regular beat between dawn and dusk. They call to each other incessantly with piercing calls. Long tailed tits huddle together in a winter roost where they form a single clump of feathers, with numerous tails protruding from the entrance to the roost. Blackbirds can be noisy as they rummage about among dead leaves which are under bushes and not covered in snow. When frozen ground prevents them getting at worms they may feed on berries in our gardens such as those of pyracantha and cotoneaster bushes. Blackbirds are very aggressive and will even chase away other blackbirds including their mates of the previous summer. They will sometimes drive off other species of bird and seem to have a particular antipathy to song thrushes. Wood pigeons stalk about in a lordly fashion and other birds keep clear of them. They can appear larger than normal in winter because they puff out their feathers to keep themselves warm. Goldfinches find a lot of their natural food from seeds, such as those of the thistle, at ground level. They will flock to gardens in winter for any niger or sunflowers seeds. But they may leave the country altogether and go south to France or Spain. Good for them! The chaffinch is one of our most numerous and widespread species. They can be seen on feeders, bird tables and the ground under them where they pick up bits and pieces falling from above. Chaffinches can often be seen feeding on crumbs from under outside tables at

tourist spots. Finally, I come to robins which fly furtively to the ground to feed. They have very large eyes which enable them to feed, if necessary, in artificial light. They fiercely defend their winter feeding territories against other robins and even the inoffensive, little duncock is likely to be a victim of a robin's aggression. As is well known, robins can be very tame. Their winter song has a somewhat melancholy and wistful air about it. I end by quoting the advice of the RSPB that feeding stations should be sited, where possible, near to shrubbery where small birds can quickly find cover from predators such as sparrow hawks and cats.

Joe Ennis

See website www.joennis.jimdo.com for other Nature Notes, new articles will be uploaded monthly.

RIDES FROM RAINHAM by KEMSLEY & I

Editor: We included the larger portion of this Wigmore and Hempstead ride, first published in Action Forum in January 1981, in last month's edition. This is the concluding paragraph suitably illustrated on the front cover this month.

Just outside Hempstead we dismounted at the "No Entry" sign and walked down Chapel Lane. Opposite Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre we had a look at the site, in the corner of a wood, and near a solitary yew tree, of St Mary Magdalene Chapel, Lidsing. A newspaper report in 1880 said of the Chapel built in the middle ages, "for years past the edifice has been gradually decaying and crumbling away . . . the worshippers have assembled themselves in the neighbouring shrine at Bredhurst - the whole place bears the stamp of desolation and ruin." The Chapel was pulled down in 1885, being a danger to gypsies and tramps using it for shelter. One of its doorways was placed in Restoration House in Rochester and its bell was removed to a Chatham Factory. A photograph was taken of what appear to be local dignitaries (and an Army sergeant?) standing in front of the mediaeval chapel prior to its demolition. These men could never have foreseen, or imagined in their strangest dreams, that one day thousands of people would daily converge on the isolated valley, opposite their ruined chapel to do their shopping, by a mode of transport some of them would probably never live to see. Leaving the crowds behind us, we soon regained the Maidstone Road, after which an easy ride downhill brought us home.

ERIC 'TICH' ROTHERHAM Long Serving Rainham Teacher

Of the teachers who worked at Rainham Secondary School for Boys and the Howard School over the years none had a longer career than Eric Rotherham. After training at Goldsmiths College in London the little man from the Yorkshire town bearing his name arrived in Rainham and stayed loyal to the two schools for over fifty years.

Eric became well-known for the part he played in organising school football and cricket matches and at one stage managed Medway Schools' District Football Association teams. After matches he regularly drove boys home in his vehicle. He also once played in a staff versus boy's football match in front of the entire Orchard Street school population. He turned out wearing a pair of white shorts almost down to his ankles but still succeeded in scoring the only goal of the game to the rapturous cheers of about 500 pupils. During the cricket season at net practice Eric would challenge schoolboy bowlers to bowl him out after he placed a sixpenny piece on one of the stumps. If successful the lucky boy could keep the sixpence. At weekends he turned out for Rainham Cricket Club as a bowler and introduced many boys to the club.

Working as a craft teacher who occasionally taught maths, he also had a variety of other talents. As a Rainham cricketer and footballer he gained some fame during the late 1950s and 1960s, he could speak French and could play the tuba. During his final years at the Howard School during the 1990s he trained the school brass band and finally retired at the age of 81. For about thirty years Eric Rotherham and his wife collected antique tobacco jars and after retiring they travelled extensively in the UK, the USA and Eastern Europe purchasing items for their collection. Pieces included porcelain figurines of Kaiser Wilhelm, sultans, Turks, elephants and pigs. After Eric died aged 89 in 2009 his collection known as 'The Rotherham Collection' was sold at Canterbury Auction Galleries for a substantial price. Eric even began writing a book about porcelain figurines but he died before its completion. For those who remember him, the cheerful little Rainham craft teacher who referred to pupils as 'laddie,' was known for a bit more than showing generations of Rainham boys how to make clay pots or for taking a long run up to slipper disaffected pupils.

David Wood.

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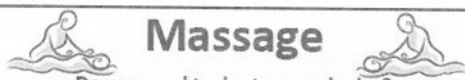
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Diary 2018

March 17th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 3rd Mar).

March 18th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,

Leisurely circular walk 5.5 miles / 8.8 km, estimated
finish 1.00pm, meet in the Square Elham, Canterbury.
CT4 6TJ TR176438, Picnic lunch stop along the way
and pub at end. Contact: Heather, 07887 750881

March 18th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Lindsay Floyd 07743 702049 Andy Boorman

07881 933358 Meopham Green. The Cricketers PH Car
Park with landlord's permission or around the green GR
640652 DA13 0QA. 4 mile walk. Dogs Allowed

March 19th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 5th Mar).

March 19th - Wigmore WI, 7.30 - 9.30pm, St Matthews
Community Centre, Drewery Drive, speakers & events.

Visitors Welcome, interested contact Chris Ellison
01634 372976 or Barbara Strachan 01634 268611

March 19th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St
Paul's Church, Parkwood, 7.30pm, Dogs Trust - Lara
Murphy, All welcome, ring Kate Archer 01634 360797.

March 20th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,
Parkwood Community Centre, ME8 9PM. 7.30 - 9.45
pm £4 Kenyan Safari - Birds and Animals - Brian
Gallop Field Trips: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

March 20th - GHS Floral Art Group, Workshop 2 -
'Winters End' - a Symmetrical foliage only
arrangement, (see 6th Mar).

March 21st - 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

March 21st - Bredhurst Garden Club, Village Hall,
7.30pm, David and Maria Lander 'The Benefits of Tai
Chi for Gardeners', Spring Show Judge: Gordon
Chilmaid New members welcome ring 07791 781 910

March 22nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Flower/
Chocolate Demonstration - Gill Cromarty, (see 1st Mar)

March 23rd - Medway Geographical Society, 7.30, David
Carder - A History of Maps Holy Trinity Church,
Twydall Lane, Gillingham ME8 6TN, all welcome, just
come or ring Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

March 23rd - Jazz at The Alexander Centre, 15-17
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March 23rd - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club, 8.00pm,
Sue Rivers/ Jo Fooks Band Admission £12, 01634
354352 or 07544 312743, Website coljazz.webs.com

March 24th - Brain Tumour Charity Quiz, 7.15pm -
10.00pm, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall Lane, Tea
and Coffee and biscuits in interval, Bring own drink
and food. Free parking Contact Olwen O'Dowd 01634
263622 for tickets £5 per person

March 24th - Wine & Wisdom Evening, Friends of St
Mary Magdalene, Gillingham, 7.30pm prompt,
Woodlands Academy, Gillingham ME7 2DU, Free Tea
& Coffee, Entry £5 per person, Bring Your Own
Nibbles & Drinks, To Book ring 01634 851965

March 25th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,
Moderate circular walk 8.6 miles / 13.8 km, estimated
finish 2.45pm, Camer Park, Meopham DA13 0XT.
TQ649669. Bring picnic lunch for mid-way break.
John, 07749 760788, billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk

March 25th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Margaret Crouch 01634 376080 Doreen Maguire
01634 376230 Seathorpe Ave, Merrymans Hill Minster
Sheppey car park or roadside GR954737 ME12 2LT.
5 mile fairly flat walk, Dogs Allowed

March 25th - Indoor Boot Fair, Twydall Community
Centre, Beechings Way 10.00am - 2.00pm, pitches
£10, to book pinkdukebox@aol.com or 07809 892883

March 26th - 31st - Hempstead Valley Easter Gift &
Garden Event, www.hempsteadvalley.com

March 28th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, 7.00 for
7.15pm, Annual Spring Show and Daffodil
Competition, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral
Road ME7 4PU, details Call Sandie 07962 277330

March 28th - Rainham Historical Society, Queen
Victoria's dreadful Uncles, (see 28th Feb).

March 28th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, From
Back Stage to Front of House - John Short, (28th Feb).

March 29th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting,
(see 1st Mar).

March 29th - Rainham Friendship Group, St Margaret's
Millennium Centre, 1.45 - 3.30pm, all welcome, £2 per
session, hosted by Hands & Gillingham Volunteer
Centre. Speaker/entertainment. 01634 577984 details.

March 30th - Easter Bunny Hunt, Capstone Farm Country
Park, 11.00am - 3.00pm, £3 per child for accompanied
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Diary 2018

March 30th - 'The Crucifixion' by John Stainer, St. Mary
 The Virgin Church Choir and Upchurch Choral Society,
 7.00pm in St Mary's Church, Free Admission -
 Retiring Collection for Myeloma UK
 March 31st - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 3rd Mar).
 April 1st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
 meet Brian Gevaux 01634 235883 Parkwood Shops
 Carpark, Rainham GR808642 ME8 9PN for 6 mile
 undulating walk. No stiles, one steep slope. Dogs OK
 April 2nd - Easter Bunny Hunt, Riverside Country Park,
 see March 30th ring 01634 337432 for details.
 April 2nd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 5th Mar).
 April 3rd - Whistles and Walking Sticks, Capstone Farm
 Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon or 1.00 - 3.00pm, £3
 per child suitable for accompanied children aged 5 - 12
 years. Ring 01634 338191 for details.
 April 3rd - Breast Cancer Support Group, Medway
 Hospital, Level 2, Area 7, 7.00 - 9.00pm. Angela from
 'Mindfulness' will be giving a talk, details Angela
 Blackwell 01634 861802 or 07761 853750
 April 3rd - Rainham Horticultural Society, Spring Show.
 (see 6th Mar).
 April 3rd - GHS Floral Art Group, 'All things Easter' -
 miniature and petite arrangements, (see 6th Mar).
 April 4th - Big Bug Hunt, Pond Dipping and Sweep
 Netting, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon or
 1.00 - 3.00pm, children must be accompanied by an
 adult. £3 per child, ring 01634 337432 for details.
 April 5th - Beginners Fishing for Children, Capstone
 Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon or 1.00 -
 3.00pm, Learn the basics beginners and improvers, £10
 accompanied children aged 8 - 12 years, 01634 338191
 April 5th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's
 Community Centre, 2.00pm, 'Pearly King & Queen' -
 John & Peggy Scott, for over 50s ring 01634 234712
 April 6th - Inner Wheel Club of Gillingham, Quiz,
 Upchurch River Valley Golf Club 7.00pm sharp, tickets
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April 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
 meet Mo Fleisig 07976 600393 Linton Village Church
 Car Park off Linton Hill A229 GR754502 ME17 4AW
 for 6 mile undulating, steep descent, 6 stiles. Dogs OK
 April 8th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Capstone
 Farm Country Park, (see 11th Mar).
 April 9th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,
 Organist - Chris Powell, (see 17th Mar).
 April 9th - Rainham Flower Club, Demonstration by
 Graham King (see 12th Mar).
 April 10th - Mallet and Badge Making, Capstone Farm
 Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon or 1.00 - 3.00pm. £3
 per child suitable for accompanied children aged 5 - 12
 years ring 01634 338191 for more information
 April 10th Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, 8.00pm,
 St. George Hotel, New Road, Chatham. 'What You
 Don't Know About' - Mrs. Alison Ellman-Brown, ring
 01634 851512 for details or just turn up.
 April 11th - Beginners Fishing for Children, (see 5th Ap)
 April 11th - East Medway U3A, Mary Smith - A School
 Girls War (WW2), (see 14th Mar).
 April 11th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, (28th Feb)
 April 12th - Wigmore Thursday Club, 'Medway
 Magistrates', (see 1st Mar)
 April 12th - Kite Making Workshop, Riverside Country
 Park, 10.00am - 12noon, £5 per person, ring 01634
 338191 for more information
 April 14th - Craft Market, (see 10th Mar)
 April 14th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 3rd Mar)

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