

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

AUGUST 2018
NUMBER 545



Recent pictures of the Howard School campus. Rainham Secondary Boys School moved from Orchard Street to this purpose built site in September 1968, fifty years ago. When Gillingham Grammar School moved from Third Avenue, Gillingham in 1975 it became the bi-lateral Secondary/Grammar School that it is today. See Alan Major's letter on page 2 and David Wood's article on page 9.

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Editorial

My assumption that the boys in our front cover photo last month would match the names supplied for a year later was wrong! Only three actually appear. Derrick Cooper middle row left hand side with Barry Mullarke seated next to him and Andrew Page back row extreme left. Apologies to the others named - we hope to include you 1957/58 picture in the future. Four years ago, largely due to the inspired ceramic poppies display in London, we were all very well informed as the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War approached. The United Kingdom declared war on Germany on August 4th 1914. 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red' was an art work in the moat of the Tower of London, between July and November 2014. It consisted of 888,246 ceramic red poppies, each representing a British or Colonial serviceman killed in the War. The artist was Paul Cummins and the title was taken from the first line of a poem by an unknown World War I soldier. Back in 2014 a £40 million First World War Centenary Cathedral Repairs Fund was launched by the government inviting applications from Catholic and Church of England cathedrals to address urgent repair works. The fund prioritised making buildings weatherproof, safe and open to the public as well as ensuring they would be in a good condition to host acts of remembrance for the centenary of the First World War armistice in 2018. Rochester Cathedral Received a total of £823,000 which helped to repair and replace aging roof structures. The Cathedral is joining organisations across Medway in hosting a '5,000 Poppies' exhibition this November which will feature thousands of poppies knitted by the local community to commemorate the anniversary. Through the summer visitors will have an opportunity to knit poppies at the Cathedral. The 5000 poppies movement began as a small personal tribute by two Australian women Lynn Berry and Margaret Knight to honour their fathers who both fought in World War II, and has become an international tribute of respect and remembrance to those who have served in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. If you would like to contribute to either the cathedral or our local Remembrance Day appeal for knitted poppies see the Royal British Legion website or contact Sandra Colyer 01634 362863 email sandracolyer@hotmail.co.uk for a knitted poppy pattern.

At the moment it looks as though we are all going to enjoy fantastic holiday weather even if we are staying at home - so do have a very good month and make the most of it while it lasts, we will be here again in September.

Correspondence

SILVER SURFERS

Dear Editor,

Each year in September/October Rainham School for Girls offer free IT sessions for people who are complete beginners.

If any of your readers have not joined the digital revolution, don't know how to send an email, use a search engine, construct a simple poster or just want to use 'word' to write a letter, we may be able to help. So, if you are a complete beginner and you are interested in coming along for one hour a week for 4-5 weeks, one of our students will show you how to do it, at your own pace, with your own device [or one of our computers]. Interested?

Call 01634 362746 and ask to speak to Mrs Moon.

RAINHAM ART GROUP EXHIBITION

Dear Editor

From Friday 27th July to Saturday 1st September an exhibition of original paintings for sale in a variety of media and styles by local artists from the Rainham Art Group will be held at Walderslade Village Library, Walderslade Centre ME5 9LR

Rainham Art Group is a friendly, supportive group of artists who meet weekly. Members of the group pursue both individual painting projects and participate in group activities that may focus on a theme or a famous artist.

For more information about the group please email: rainhamartgroup@gmail.com

RAINHAM SCHOOL for BOYS

Dear Editor,

With reference to Vic Wickenden's letter last month. I left Solomon Road Council School in June 1940 following its reopening after closure due to evacuation. I then attended Orchard Street School until 1943. My class teachers as I progressed through the school were as follows. First a very elderly teacher (he seemed to us) Mr Wilbrams, bow-legged, we used to joke he had been in the cavalry. Second class was the teacher Vic could not name, Mr Taylor. He indeed seemed to get satisfaction from whacking the boys. He once hit me on the head, just passing, with the edge of a ruler that hurt for the rest of the day. Desmond Nicholls from Broad Walk was in the class, he was rather 'overlarge' in size. Mr Taylor frequently had Desmond bend over in front of the class while he wacked his backside several times for no obvious reason. Class three was Mr Sergeant, quite the opposite with the boys. His history lessons were often reminiscing about his experience as a German prisoner

of war during the 1914-18 conflict. Top class was Mr Gleadle, tall, authoritative, a good teacher who sometimes arrived in RAF uniform and did not teach in the afternoon when we had a replacement. While in Mr Sergeant's class I sat near Richard Harrison, from Wigmore, who wanted to be an artist - I still have one of his drawings. I have sometimes wondered if he achieved his ambition. We also had Mr Sneath for metalwork and carpentry, despite the shortage of materials (for some reason we called him Mr Slice). In place of a regular teacher we sometimes had Mrs Dudding, from the girls school, or Mrs Drake for general subjects. One session a week Mr Bowden, a music teacher, tried to teach us 'Where a bee sucks' etc. Mr Bowden was a quiet, rather shy, timid man outwardly and did not have much control over us. Sometimes it was almost hell let loose but it all changed unexpectedly. The torment for him ceased when the boys learned that his wife who had been very ill had died. Our attitude changed and there was no more baiting Mr Bowden, his classes became more orderly and we honestly tried to learn to sing. I also have happy memories of those years even of Mr Taylor who was eventually called up to the RAF.

With reference to Jayne Laming's letter Arthur Green Newsagent and his wife are interred in the extension of Stockbury's St Mary Magdalene churchyard.

Alan Major

41 Heaton Road Canterbury CT1 3PY 01227 459246

2nd NORTH RAINHAM RAINBOWS.

Dear Editor

This is a local Rainbows Unit, the youngest members of Girlguiding that meets in a school hall in Rainham during term time. Rainbows is for girls aged 5 - 7 years. Register your interest and join our waiting list via www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested and select the unit from the geomap during the registration process. Further details can be found via our facebook community page and website.

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FAIRVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL - Help Needed!
 Dear Editor,

Were you a pupil at Fairview Primary School in the 1970s? The school has recently been donated four reels of cine film. They are records of the following school trips:

1972 - Belgium; 1973 - Belgium; 1974 - Guernsey 1977 - Isle of Wight

The school is planning to digitise these and the make a short film to include excerpts and interviews with any former pupils who attended. If you were there, or know someone who may have been, please contact Robin Halls at the school. The number is 338710, or e-mail office@fairviewprimary.medway.sch.uk.

SUMMER FAIR

Sunday 26th August, 11.00am - 3.00pm

Cats Protection Adoption Centre Bredhurst,

11 Matts Hill Road, ME9 7XA

Fun for all the family, Craft stalls, Bric-a-Brac,

Refreshments, BBQ, Ice cream,

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Free parking nearby. For information please contact Cats Protection 01634 232471

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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: August 21st 2018

August 4th - Sports & Games Afternoon, Bredhurst Village Playing Field, 2.00 - 4.30pm, Races for all age groups (13 and under) Refreshments and Raffle Entry and races free. Any proceeds to St Peters Church. Queries June Cox 01634 268544 or 07842 216116
August 4th - Annual Show, Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall Lane, ME8 6JU. Open to the public 2.00pm. Details 01634 852519.
August 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, Meet Doreen Maguire 01634 376230, Manor Park Country Park car park, St Leonards Street, West Malling toilets and café ME19 6PE GR678571 for 5 mile walk through field tracks and paths. Could be muddy across fields. Dogs Allowed
August 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Hosey Hill to Chartwell via Toy's Hill circular walk with lunch stop at Chartwell. Leisurely 6 miles / 9.7 km (estimated finish 1.15pm) Some good views for cameras.
August 5th - Afternoon Tea, St Michael and all Angels Church, Hartlip, 3.00 - 5.00pm, join us for a relaxing afternoon of tea and homemade cakes in our lovely church yard with beautiful views across the orchards to Rainham and help us to keep our beautiful church alive.
August 6th - 19th - Free kids' activities at Hempstead Valley, 11.00am - 3.00pm suitable for all ages from toddlers to grandparents, children must be supervised at all times. Events will be held inside the centre, outside Boots, activities see www.hempsteadvalley.com.

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August 7th - Caring for Carers - Pop-in. Are you caring for someone old or young? You are welcome, 10.00am - 12noon, St. Paul's Church, Parkwood, chat over a tea/coffee & cake. Details Maureen Cannon 01634 235723
August 7th - Breast Cancer Support Group, 7.00 - 9.00pm, Medway Hospital, Level 2, Area 7. A talk on 'Evacuation' by Brenda a member of the support group. Should be interesting, details contact Angela Blackwell 01634 861802 or Mobile 07761 853750
August 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm, Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Competition Night. New members welcome, details 01634 366276.
August 8th - Big Bug Hunt, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon or 1.00 - 3.00pm, Explore the park in search of underwater creatures and amazing mini-beasts. £3 per child, Children must be accompanied by an adult. Ring 01634 337432 to book.
August 8th - East Medway U3A Smallholders Club, Springvale ME8 0JG, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Leslie Allman - Life in a Victorian Rookery in the 1840s, New members welcome, no waiting list. Free to members, £2 for visitors. Every second Wednesday of the month. Ring 07816 159 668 or see www.eastmedwayu3a
August 8th - Bredhurst WI, Village Hall, 7.30pm, George Wildridge showing Casualty Simulation. For further information regarding WI activities contact our secretary Pam Ormiston 01634 365789
August 9th - Beginners Fishing for Children, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon and 1.00 - 3.00pm, Learn the basics of fishing with a park ranger. Aimed at beginners and those wanting to improve. All equipment supplied. £10 per child, accompanied children aged 8 - 12 years. Ring 01634 338191 to book.
August 9th - Mallet & Badge Making, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon, learn to use hand tools correctly. £3 per child, accompanied children aged 5 to 12 years. Ring 01634 337432 to book.

August 10th - 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.
August 10th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 6.30pm Meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438, Dockside Outlet car park meet outside the Cinema ME4 4LL GR764697 for 3 mile easy stroll around St Mary's Island. Dogs OK
August 11th - 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
August 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Leisurely circular walk 5 miles / 8.1km estimated finish 12.45pm, Oare Marshes, walk on the Saxon shore way through Luddenham to St Mary's church across to Oare and up the creek (without a paddle) back to the reserve.
August 12th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, Meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 828249, Cobham Village public car park DA12 3BN GR670685 for 5 mile walk via Lower & Upper Bush. Undulating walk with hilly section. Possibly some stiles. Dogs Allowed
August 12th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm. Get involved by helping with practical tasks. Meet at the visitor centre, Ring 01634 338191 for more information
August 13th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, details 01634 230500
August 13th - Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm, St Matthews Church Hall, Wigmores ME8 0NX Practical Evening - 'Ikebana' A friendly, encouraging club, delighted to welcome experienced and novices. Do give us a try, information see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 863034 / 01634 373928 / 01795 843180
August 13th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8 9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Chiho Sunamoto, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694
August 13th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, 2nd Monday each month to help those in employment who have lost a loved one. Join us for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.
August 14th - Butterflies and Bush Crickets, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon and 1.00 - 3.00pm, Soak up the summer sun with the parks

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butterfly and cricket population, make your own butterfly or cricket. £3 per child, accompanied children aged 5 to 12 years. Ring 01634 338191 to book.
August 15th - Flying Fish, Capstone Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon, Join one of the rangers in the visitor centre and let your imagination run away, £3 per child, suitable for accompanied children aged 5 to 12 years. Ring 01634 338191 to book or just turn up.
August 15th - Wigmores Ladies Club, Howard Hall, Woodside, 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome to this cheerful group, just come along or ring 01634 388912 for more information
August 15th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Village Hall, 7.30pm, Sue Turner 'The Social History of the Potato', Pelargonium and Dahlia Show, New members always welcome ring 07791 781 910 for details
August 16th - Ted's Picnic, Riverside Country Park, 11.00am - 2.00pm, Bring a picnic and a teddy bear and join in the fun. Storytelling, fun and games. £4 per child, suitable for accompanied children aged 3 to 7 years. Ring 01634 337432 to book.
August 19th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, Meet John Trebill 01634 244045 Halling Community Centre car park if open or nearby roads ME2 1BS GR705639 for 6.5 mile circular walk via the North Downs and Medway riverbank. Steep climb up to North Downs. Walking on roads and tracks plus through woodland along riverside. Dogs Allowed
August 19th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Leisurely circular walk 6.5 miles / 10.5km estimated finish 1.30pm, from Hadlow south west to Faulkners Oast, before heading south to the River Medway. We then head eastwards along the riverbank before joining the Wealdway to Golden Green and back to Hadlow.
August 20th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St Paul's Church, Parkwood, 7.30pm, Members Meeting, All welcome, ring Kate Archer 01634 360797.
August 20th - Wigmores 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
August 21st - Big Bug Hunt, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon or 1.00 - 3.00pm, Explore the park in search of underwater creatures and amazing mini-beasts. £3 per child, Children must be accompanied by an adult. Ring 01634 337432 to book.

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AFTERNOON TEA

St Michael and all Angels Church, Hartlip
We will be holding our famous afternoon teas on
Sundays 5th August & 2nd Sept, 3.00 – 5.00pm.
Please join us for a relaxing afternoon of tea and
homemade cakes in our lovely church yard with
beautiful views across the orchards to Rainham and
help us to keep our beautiful church alive.

CARING FOR CARERS - POP-IN

If you are caring for someone you are welcome on
Tuesday 7th August, 10.00am – 12noon
St. Paul's Church, Parkwood
Come, chat over a tea/coffee & cake.
For further information please contact
Maureen Cannon 01634 235723

MARKET

Saturday 11th August, 9.00am – 12.30pm
St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham
Free entry, Refreshments available
To book a stall (£10 each) please contact email
cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com or ring 07779 366054

KITE MAKING WORKSHOP
Capstone Farm Country Park
Tuesday 28th August, 10.00am – 12noon
Make kites then fly them in Capstones winds.
£5 per kite, for accompanied children 5 to 12 years.
Ring 01634 338191 to book or just turn up.

HEMPSTEAD HORTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Saturday 1st September, 2.30pm
All Saints Church and Hempstead Library
Application forms for entries and schedules available
from Hempstead Library
Closing date for entries 25th August
Open to the public from 2.30pm.
Green fingered gardeners, bakers and jam makers
welcome to participate.

ART, CRAFT AND PRODUCE SHOW
Bredhurst Village Hall
Saturday 1st September, Public Entry 2.00pm
Classes for all ages and abilities. Many craft related
stalls and refreshments available.
Residents, members of St Peter's Church, Bredhurst
Woodland Action Group (BWAG) and all Bredhurst
organisations and their relatives are eligible to enter
(see T&Cs) Download entry forms and schedules at
bredhurstvillageshow.com/home/entry/ or email
BredhurstVillageShow_Nichola@outlook.com
Closing date for entries Tuesday 29th August

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WILL ADAMS FESTIVAL
Saturday 8th September, 11.00am - 4.30pm
Gillingham Park. Free entry.

The festival celebrates the life of Will Adams, who
grew up in Gillingham during the Tudor period
before becoming a sailor in the Royal Navy. After
retiring from the navy, Adams navigated a fleet of
five Dutch ships from West Africa; during this
hazardous voyage his ship ran aground on the island
of Kyushu in Japan, where he was captured,
questioned and imprisoned as a pirate. After release
he was ordered to sail to Tokyo. The Shogun was
impressed with his knowledge of shipbuilding and
navigation and Adams became a trusted aide and
diplomatic adviser. As a reward, he was granted the
honoured title of Samurai and given a small estate in
Hemi, which is now known as Yokosuka. There's
lots to see and do at the festival, including Taiko.
Meantime Drumming, martial arts, living history and
storytelling. Dogs welcome kept on leads.

NEWINGTON UNCOVERED
Newington History Group Heritage Open Days
St Mary's Church, Newington ME9 7JT
Saturday, September 8th, 2.00 – 5.00pm
Sunday, September 9th, 2.00 – 5.00pm

One theme is *Extraordinary Women*, in recognition
of the centenary of the Universal Suffrage Act, and
will include remarkable lives of villagers past and
present. You will find out about the village's rich
heritage, including the Roman occupation,
Australian pioneers, royal connections, World Wars
and other unique stories.

Entry is free and refreshments are available.
For details contact Thelma Dudley 01795 842711 or
newingtonhistorygroup@outlook.com. Visit the
website newingtonhistorygroup.btck.co.uk
or follow @newingtonhg.

'IN FLANDERS FIELDS'
Saturday 22nd September, 8.00pm
St Matthews Community Centre
Drewery Drive, Wigmore

Wigmore Voices are proud to announce a variety
show 'In Flanders Field' to commemorate the
centenary of the end of World War I.
We would love you to join us for an evening full of
fun, drama and songs. Forties dress is optional.
There will also be a licensed bar available.
Tickets £7 available from Sue on 01634 370639.

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR JULY

"The Pipistrelle or Common Bat is, in a general sense, familiar to everybody, for it may be seen in the evenings flying everywhere, even in the streets of crowded cities," states my 1971 Observers Book on Wild Animals. Those were the days; when bats were everywhere and large, attractively coloured moths were attracted to the lights in people's bathrooms. I bring readers up-to-date in writing about three fauna that have diets of insects caught in the air. In the spring of last year Mr W, a retired farmer who lives along the Lower Rainham Road, phoned me in some despair. After many years of swallows nesting in his stables and other outbuildings, not a single swallow had turned up. I went to see him and reminded him about the long, hazardous journey that swallows undertake, from South Africa and, in particular, across the Sahara Desert. Then, out of the blue, Mr W rang me to say, in some excitement, that a pair of swallows had been nesting in a part of his goat house that he rarely enters. Young swallows were lined up along a beam. By the time I could get down to the farm, the young had flown and were nowhere to be seen. I was a little disappointed but very pleased for Mr W. This spring I'd heard nothing from Mr W, so I rang him. This time he really had had no swallows. I reminded him of the downpours and cold east winds we had had in the spring which could have adversely affected swallows in the south east of the country. His darkly lit stables and other outbuilding are ideally suited for swallows and I hoped that he would be lucky next spring. Enquiries at the Countryside Park on the Lower Rainham Road revealed that swallows were breeding in the area and I myself saw at least six feeding over the scrub outside the Water Treatment Plant on Motney Hill, in some of whose building those swallows would be nesting.

The number of swifts in Rainham have dropped dramatically over the years; no longer do we see and hear non-breeding juveniles scream over the church roofs and around the tower on warm sunny, summer evenings. There is a small colony centred on the

former oasthouse alongside Rainham Station. Small numbers of swifts can also be seen above the houses in Third Avenue in Gillingham and in Twydall Lane. A friend of mine, Mr G, is absolutely delighted when he sees the first swifts of spring, in early May, in the air above Rainham and is quite despondent, in August, when he sees the last of them. He rang me with news of a group of thirty or so juveniles which he saw screaming through Rainham. He described them as like a crowd of hooligans from another area bent on causing mischief. We discussed the matter, both of us knowing quite well that one cannot treat them as hooligans. He and I concluded that the group he saw comprised juveniles from various colonies in the area who had joined together for company and enjoyment. Their screams can only be described as expression of joy and excitement. There would also be an element of showing off to each other and, in particular, a young male may be seeking to impress a young female. Much like, then, the juveniles we all know and love!

On two or three occasions a long-standing friend of mine has rung me about the bats she has roosting, during the summer, in the gable end wall of her house. In particular, they roost behind the "rustic" wooden boards that overlap each other and which are affixed to the triangular breeze block wall between the two barge boards. Having spoken to me again, quite recently, I thought that I ought to experience for myself the bats leaving their roost in the evening. A date and time at the end of June having been agreed for my visit, I decided to refresh my memory about what were most certainly female pipistrelle bats in a maternity roost. Pipistrelles are Britain's smallest bat and are the most common ones to be seen in towns. They fly with rapid twists and turns and, in flight, they can frequently be heard uttering shrill, little squeaks. The young are born between early June and mid-July in maternity roosts which consist almost exclusively of females. Each female usually has just one young which is born bald and blind and is suckled by its mother. Those with young to feed may take several feeding trips during the night whilst their youngsters are left inside the roost, hanging upside down, in the care of the creche. Female pipistrelles can be active

within the roost during the day, especially if young are present and the roost gets very hot. Chattering may be heard. It may also be noisy at the time for leaving the roost as dusk approaches. The young are weaned in six weeks, so the earliest ones to be born may have been weaned by the end of August. Most maternity colonies start to disperse in September. On the appointed evening my friend (Mrs J) and I settled ourselves down in a garden seat each, on the drive, with a good view of the gable end. I asked her how many bats we could expect to see and she said that she counted forty-nine the evening before but there could have been more if she had stayed longer. About twenty minutes after sunset the first bat flew out, followed in quick succession by others from different crevasses in the planks. We began to count them together. Some turned down one side of the house and some to the other but all then headed in the direction of Cozenton Park. The exodus was all over in half an hour and, quite amazingly and almost unbelievably, we counted ninety-three bats, repeat ninety-three. Bearing in mind the date of my visit, at the end of June, some of the females might already have given birth and some might still have been pregnant. The exodus was an awe-inspiring wildlife spectacle, here in Rainham, and Mrs J and I had the privilege of being the only people to witness that particular evening's performance.

Joe Ennis

THE HOWARD SCHOOL in the Early Years

Moving from Orchard Street to the 36 acre site at Derwent Way in September 1968, the boys found the new school much more spacious. Many were puzzled with the name and thought it derived from the building company that had constructed the site. In reality the building was named after Dorothy Howard who had served as Education officer for Medway and had been active in local community and political affairs. With a school population of about 500, Mr Bacon served as headmaster. Most of the Orchard Street staff continued although a few retired while well-known caretaker Mr Millgate remained at Orchard Street when the transfer took place.

Mr Newell continued as the art teacher and later became acting-head after the retirement of Mr Bacon, while Mr Gibbs continued as the principal English teacher, the librarian and wrote the annual school play. He left the school soon after its opening to teach at the former Sittingbourne teacher training college.

Mr Patterson served as geography teacher and Mr Barnes maths. Mr Powell continued teaching science later became deputy-headmaster and Mr Rotherham continued teaching craft and organised the school football and cricket teams before retiring aged 81 during the late 1990s. Mr Groves, a muscular rugby player and athlete, taught PE and games. New teacher arrivals included Mr Ansell and Mr Bullen who also played for Rainham Cricket Club, Mr Clark who taught PE and Vaughan Jenkins, a rotund Welshman with a booming voice. Sixth former Alan Suttie from Maidstone Road, who later became a graphic artist in London, served as head-prefect.

Because the playing fields were new a large number of stones appeared from below the surface, so many school football matches were played at the Langton Playing Fields, during the summer some home cricket matches were played at Berengrove Park. A red gravel area existed for football practice but boys complained of serious leg grazes after falling over and the orange dust stuck to their clothes. Outdoor artificial nets existed for cricket practice but the playground was preferred by pupils for sport. With a big gym, spacious science labs, well-lit classrooms and a dining hall, the new school had better facilities than previously.

Well-known pupils from the period included George Meegan who later became the first person to walk from the tip of South America to the top of North America for which he is in the Guinness Book of Records. Footballer Derek Hales played for Luton, Charlton, West Ham, Derby and Gillingham. He later returned to the Howard School as a part-time football coach. Stuart Hart became landlord of The Angel pub in Station Road and worked as a familiar scrap metal collector around Rainham while Raymond Hales, Alfie Fisher, Andy Findlay, Geoff Stone, Mick Arnold, Peter Heath and Malcolm Young became well-known local footballers.

With the closure of Gillingham Grammar School, the pupils from there moved to the Howard School in 1975 where they formed the grammar section of a new bi-lateral school, one of only five in the United Kingdom led by headmaster Mr Hicks. This amalgamation of the old Rainham Secondary School with Gillingham Grammar expanded the Howard School population to about 1,500 boys. The school remains one of the largest in Medway today.

David Wood.

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Park, 10.00am - 12noon and 1.00 - 3.00pm. Try willow
weaving- a taster session for true beginners. £5 per
person, suitable for adults and children from age eight.
Ring 01634 338191 to book or just turn up.

August 22nd - Beginners Fishing for Children, Capstone
Farm Country Park, 10am - 12noon and 1.00 - 3.00pm.
Learn the basics of fishing with a park ranger. Aimed at
beginners and those wanting to improve. All equipment
supplied. £10 per child, suitable for accompanied
children aged 8 - 12 years. Ring 01634 338191 to book.

August 25th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, Meet Stephen Manning 07551712438
Whitstable Station car park Old Bridge Road (charge)
for 7 mile Crab & Winkle easy walk to Canterbury.
Return by bus - Bring your Bus Pass! Dogs Allowed

August 26th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,
Moderate circular walk 6.5 miles / 10.5km estimated
finish 1.30pm From Ryarsh north to the North Downs
Way, then eastwards to Paddlesworth, Birling Ashes
and Birling Wood before heading back to Ryarsh.

August 26th - Summer Fair, Cats Protection Adoption
Centre Bredhurst, 11.00am - 3.00pm, Fun for all the
family, Adults £1, Children Free, Details 01634 232471

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

August 28th - Kite Making Workshop, Capstone Farm
Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon, Join the rangers
making kites in the visitor centre then wrap up warm to
fly them in Capstone's rather bracing winds. £5 per
kite, suitable for accompanied children aged 5 to 12
years. Ring 01634 338191 to book or just turn up.

August 29th - Wild Biscuit Decorating, Riverside Country
Park, 10.00am - 12noon, Join a ranger and decorate
your own 'tasty toad, flavoursome fox, delicious duck'
or a design of your own on a 'wild' biscuit. £3 per
child, suitable whole family. 01634 337432 to book.

All September - Art Exhibition by Local Artist Wynne
Prescott Dip SBA 'Back to Nature' Watercolours of
flowers, plants, birds and butterflies, Rainham Library
during normal opening hours. All work is for sale at
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September 1st - Bredhurst Village Art, Craft and Produce
Show, Village Hall, Exhibitors 9.00am, Public Entry
2.00pm, open to all connected to Bredhurst, closing date
Tuesday 29th Aug see bredhurstvillageshow.com/home/
entry/ or BredhurstVillageShow_Nichola@outlook.com
September 1st - Hempstead Horticultural Festival,
2.30pm, All Saints Church and Hempstead Library,
Open to the public 2.30pm. Green fingered gardeners,
bakers and jam makers welcome to participate.

September 2nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,
Leisurely circular walk 7 miles / 11.3km estimated
finish 2.00pm. From Doddington to Greet - Lady
Margaret Manor and return via Otterden Park.

September 2nd - Afternoon Tea, St Michael and all
Angels Church, Hartlip, 3.00 - 5.00pm. Please join us
for a relaxing afternoon of tea and homemade cakes
whilst enjoying the peace and tranquillity of our lovely
church yard with beautiful views across the orchards to
Rainham and help us to keep our beautiful church alive.

September 4th - Breast Cancer Support Group, 7.00 -
9.00pm, Medway Hospital, Level 2, Area 7. For more
information please contact Angela Blackwell 01634
861802 or Mobile 07761 853750

September 4th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm,
Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Caroline
Halfpenny - Alhambra Palace Garden. New members
welcome, details from 01634 366276.

September 4th - GHS Floral Art Group, 7.30 - 9.00pm,
United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road,
Gillingham, "Do your own thing" - practice night pre-
show discussion, new members welcome, first visit
free, no experience needed. Just come along and receive
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September 5th - Upchurch Horticultural Society Planning
Meeting at 97 Chaffes Lane starting at 7.30pm to make
arrangements for the September Show.

September 6th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's
Community Centre, 2.00pm, 'A Voice from Victorian
London' - Leslie Allman, for over 50s ring 01634
234712 for details.

September 7th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship
Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham every Friday
9.45am to help those who have lost a loved one. Join us
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September 8th & 9th - Honey Show, Medway Beekeepers Association, Elmcourt Garden Centre, Capstone Road, Gillingham ME7 3JQ during normal opening hours.
 September 8th & 9th - Newington Uncovered, Heritage Open Days, St Mary's Church, Newington ME9 7JT, 2.00 - 5.00pm, Entry free, refreshments available.
 September 8th - 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
 September 8th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, Annual Autumn Show, Exhibits 8.00 to 8.30am, Open For Viewing From 2.00pm, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham ME7 4PU, details Call Sandie 07962 277330
 September 8th - Will Adams Festival - Gillingham Park, Mid-Kent Astronomical Society Stand, 11.00am - 4.30pm ME7 5LJ. Free entry. Dogs welcome on leads. See website www.midkentastro.org.uk for details.
 September 8th - 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.
 September 9th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Moderate circular walk 6.5 miles / 10.5km estimated finish 1.30pm. A circular walk from Penenden Heath via Detling and Boxley.
 September 10th - Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm, St Matthews Church Hall, Wigmore ME8 0NX
 Demonstration 'Diamonds' by Avril Hill For more information see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 863034 / 01634 373928 / 01795 843180
 September 10th - Rainham Community Choir, New term starts, 7.00pm, Howard School, Rainham, New members welcome on a free 2-week trial basis.
 September 10th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, ME8 9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Tony Stace, 01634 234694

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September 10th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, details 01634 230500
 September 10th - 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.
 September 12th - East Medway U3A Smallholders Club, Springvale ME8 0JG, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Leslie Allman - Life in a Victorian Rookery in the 1840s, New members welcome, no waiting list, to members, £2 for visitors. Every second Wednesday of the month. Ring 07816 159 668 or see www.eastmedwayu3a
 September 12th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Queen Elizabeth II - Dean Caston, details Rhonda Peck 07951 629444
 September 13th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, 'Two in Harmony' - Sue Burrows and Roger Isaacs, for over 50s ring 01634 234712 for details.
 September 14th - Mid-Kent Astronomical Society (MKAS), Habitable Zones around Stars; Rebecca Whentringham, 8.00pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, See website www.bredhurstvill.co.uk or ring 07969 878211 for more information
 September 15th - Show Day, Rainham Horticultural Society, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, 2.00 - 4.00pm. New members welcome, 01634 366276.
 September 15th - Upchurch Horticultural Society September Show in the Barn to the rear of 97 Chaffes Lane. Open to the public at 2.00pm. Ample parking, refreshments, plant stall, auction of exhibits and raffle
 September 16th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Leisurely circular walk 6 miles / 9.7km estimated finish 1.15pm. A circular walk from Fenn Street - open fields, Thames riverside views.
 September 17th - Wigmore WI, 7.30 - 9.30pm, St Matthews Community Centre, Brewery Drive, various speakers & events. Visitors Welcome, interested contact Chris Ellson 01634 372976 or Barbara Strachan 01634 268611

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