

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

SEPTEMBER  
2018  
NUMBER 546



Having been dismantled over half a century ago Rainham now has a new siding proudly named Platform 0 – apparently by no means a unique numbering Gravesend, Kings Cross, Stockport, Cardiff... and others all also have one. One of the new fleet of trains introduced last year has arrived, they have not been welcomed with overwhelming enthusiasm from commuters. See page 9 for more about Platform 0.

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AF

Next Issue: October 6th 2018

Copy Date: September 25th

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## Editorial

The very welcome rain in August had only one disadvantage – it seemed always to come at the weekend! Nevertheless it was very much appreciated after virtually two completely dry months. Our brown parched grass lapped it up and within only a few days was looking largely green again and even needed cutting. Hopefully the rain was in time to salvage at least some of the vegetable crop and give the beans a new lease of life. This month sees a rash of Autumn Shows staged by each of the local horticultural groups. If you want to see what can be achieved, even in a year like this, make a note of the dates and pop along to one near you to view the exhibits and maybe even buy some to take home. It might inspire you to try your hand at fresh veg from your own garden next year. I believe it is becoming quite the thing to mix vegetables in with a flower border so you can enjoy both the visual experience of annual flowers but also gather beans or sweetcorn to enjoy with your dinner. It hardly seems possible but Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre is this autumn celebrating 40 years since it opened. This brings back many memories as I am sure it does with many readers of my generation. The Savacentre was a new concept: Sainsburys joined with British Home Stores to provide one enormous hypermarket where you could buy everything you could possibly need in one place. A unique idea in 1978. Hempstead Valley was the second store to open a year after Washington, Tyne and Wear. Such was the worry about shop lifting that no-one was allowed to take a shopping bag into the store, we all had to queue to check them into a bag room. We soon learned to leave them at home and hence the age of the free give away plastic carriers arrived. Little did we realise the harm we were doing to the planet and it has taken almost 40 years to break the habit and return to reusable bags. Customer loyalty was rewarded handsomely each Christmas – I recall free Turkeys or free Christmas Puddings being handed out just before the holiday. The annoying thing was you never knew in advance what the gift would be so found you had two turkeys or puddings rather in excess of what was needed so one of ours usually stayed in the freezer until Easter. If you have fond memories or even some pictures of the early days Ashley Halliday (see letter

page 3) would love to hear from you as he is compiling a blog of recollections. Back to school and back to reality after our long summer of sunshine, do have a very good month and we will be here again with autumn in October.

### ALAN PARMENTER

We recently received the sad news of the sudden death, at home on July 31st, of Alan Parmenter. After getting married in 1967 Alan and his wife Diane moved to Rainham from S.E London. Eager to be involved in the local community they volunteered to help with Action Forum, despite already having a four year old son and being pregnant with her second child Diane still helped by assisting with door to door distribution and holding monthly meetings at their home in Bedson Walk. They both became valued members of the editorial team. Alan also took on the task of Distribution Manager, a role he conscientiously filled for the next twenty years. I am sure people who helped with the distribution through the 70s, 80s and 90s will remember him delivering their bundles each month. At this time Rainham was growing rapidly and during this period our print run doubled from 10,000 to 20,000 copies. It was largely thanks to the volunteers on the editorial team that AF was so successful building a sound framework that continues today. Our thoughts and prayers are with all the family at this difficult time.

## Correspondence

### ANCHORIANS ASSOCIATION

Dear Editor,

As a former Chairman of The Anchorians Association, and now its Secretary, as well as being a Governor of The Howard School, I have read with interest the various articles in recent months regarding the history of Rainham Boys' and The Howard. Age can tend to blur the memory (including my own!), but recent correspondence has included inaccuracies. David Wood's article in August 2018 seems to imply that The Howard School was named as such from 1968. This is not the case. Mr Wood is correct in stating that the school is named after Dorothy Howard, but this was on the establishment of the school in 1975, when Gillingham Grammar School moved from Third Avenue, to join Rainham Boys' Secondary School, forming what was then, I believe, the first bilateral (Grammar / Secondary) School in the country. I attended the Grammar School from 1973-75, moving to The Howard in September '75 until I left in 1980.

As for The Anchorians Association, this was established on Boxing Day 1926 by a group of 30 ex-pupils and members of staff of Gillingham County (later to become, Grammar) School, which first opened in 1923. On the creation of The Howard, the School's Board of Governors approved the adoption of the Association as a ready-made old boys'

organisation. The Association moved in 1984 from its former clubhouse at the bottom of Featherby Road to its current site in Darland Avenue.

To cement the link between the former Grammar School, the Association and The Howard, the latter's badge includes an anchor; the Grammar School's Latin motto was *Valet Anchora Virtus* - 'virtue is our anchor'. Also, to reflect the link back to the Grammar School and to the Association, The Howard's principal colour is purple. While the Association's link with the Howard remains strong, it and its affiliated sports clubs (rugby, hockey, football, and table tennis) is open to all from the local community.

Yours sincerely  
Nigel Fray

### RAINHAM SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Dear Editor,

There seems to be confusion about when Rainham Secondary Modern School for Boys moved from Orchard Street to the buildings at Derwent Way.

I was amongst the first pupils to move to the new site and I left school at the end of my Fifth Year (Year 11 in current terms) in July 1967. As a school prefect and librarian I recall assisting Mr Gibbs set up the library during the holiday before the summer term of 1967. It is possible that the move was phased over time with the whole school not moving until September 1968; however, I gather that Rainham School for Girls is celebrating 50 years at Derwent Way this year and we were able to watch the construction of some of the girls school buildings from our new school.

I am grateful for David Wood's notes; evoking memories of the school. Incidentally, it was Mr Groves who introduced some of us to archery - not possible at the Orchard Street site but very safe in the spacious playing fields of the Derwent Way school!

Regards,  
Michael Jennings  
michael@mikroz.co.uk

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### OLD HEMPSTEAD VALLEY PHOTOS NEEDED

Dear Editor,  
I'm currently writing a blog about my memories and stories of Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre. It celebrates both my times spent there and the fact that Hempstead Valley (or 'The Sava' as many of us call it!) will be 40 years old at the end of 2018.

The centre have been brilliant in terms of help (and want to use the blog in their celebrations), but as I'm writing a story about each of the shops, there's lots of old shops that don't have any pictures.

If you can help (and are happy for the pictures to be published online) then please send them to me at [ahalliday@me.com](mailto:ahalliday@me.com) - I'll ensure each one used is credited to you if you would like. You can read the developing blog at [www.TheDiaryOfAHempsteadValleyKid.wordpress.com](http://www.TheDiaryOfAHempsteadValleyKid.wordpress.com) or wait till it's finished. Happy 40th Birthday Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre!

Yours sincerely  
Ashley Halliday

### DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors are needed for:

#### Rainham

Beechings Way (from Pump Lane to Pembury Way), Hereford, Monmouth, Lichfield, Ely, Truro & Ripon

#### Wigmore

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#### Parkwood - Lyall Way

Culpepper Road, Part Long Catlis, Conrad, Crispe, Beke Road, Brett, Chute, Readscoft Road, Craddock Way, Conyers, Chislet, Hempstead - Lombardy Close and Pippin Croft

#### Wildwood, Black Rock, Stalham, Coppice Court

#### Upchurch

Wallbridge Lane, part of Oak Lane, Jubilee Terrace

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*You sent the very person I needed. Carol, she could have been family!*

# 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: September 25th 2018

September 1st – 29th – Art Exhibition, Clive Bass & John  
Gilson For Sale in Walderslade Village Library

September 1st – Bredhurst Show, Village Hall, 2.00pm

September 1st – Hempstead Horticultural Festival,

2.30pm, All Saints Church and Hempstead Library,

September 2nd – Medway Towns Footpaths Group,

10.00am, Meet David Brown 07815 106791 Teynham

Station, Park Station Road, GR 956631 ME9 9EB for

6.5 mile circular walk. Dogs Allowed

September 2nd – Afternoon Tea, St Michael and all

Angels Church, Hartlip, 3.00 – 5.00pm.

September 3rd – 29th – Art Exhibition Wynne Prescott

‘Back to Nature’ Watercolours, Rainham Library. All

work for sale at reasonable prices, 01634 312387

September 4th – Breast Cancer Support Group, 7.00 –

9.00pm, Medway Hospital, Level 2, Area 7. Details

Angela Blackwell 01634 861802 or 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. Parking available on site or

public parking nearby. For details contact Kaye Buss

01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

September 5th – Upchurch Horticultural Society Planning  
Meeting 97 Chaffes Lane starting 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 01634 234712

September 6th – Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist,

scrabble, board games, tea and chat. All Saints Church,

Hempstead Road 2.00 – 4.00pm. New members always

welcome phone 07583 343 782

September 7th – Rainham Bereavement Friendship

Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham every Friday

9.45am to help those who have lost a loved one. Join us

for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.

September 8th & 9th – Honey Show, Medway Beekeepers

Association, Elmcourt Garden Centre, Gillingham ME7

3JQ during normal garden centre opening hours.

September 8th – Craft Market, Millennium Centre,

Rainham, 9.00am – 12.30pm, Free entry, Refreshments,

To book a stall (£10 each) ring 07779 366054 or email

cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com

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 – Gillingham Horticultural Society Autumn

Show, Exhibits 8.00, Viewing 2.00pm, United

Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham

ME7 4PU, details Call Sandie 07962 277330

September 8th – Will Adams Festival – Gillingham, Mid-

Kent Astronomical Society Stand, 11.00am – 4.30pm

Gillingham Park, ME7 5LJ. Free entry. Dogs welcome

on leads. Details website www.midkentastro.org.uk

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 Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, Meet Harry Keane 01634 231533, 07729  
356835 West Malling High Street. GR 681576 ME19  
6NA Car Park (Rear of Tesco) fee for 5 mile nice flat  
walk. No stiles or steps. No Dogs

September 9th – Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,  
Moderate circular walk 6.5 miles / 10.5km estimated  
finish 1.30pm. Park Penenden Heath ME14 2DQ,

TQ772573 circular walk via Detling and Boxley  
Contact David 07815 106791, brown2918@gmail.com

September 10th – Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm, St  
Matthews Church Hall, Wigmore ME8 0NX

Demonstration ‘Diamonds’ by Avril Hill An extremely  
friendly, encouraging club, all welcome see website

www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 863034

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, Rainham, ME8

9PN, 7.30pm, Organist – Tony Stace, details ring Brian  
Leonard 01634 234694

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 employed who  
have lost a loved one. Join us for a cuppa and chat, ring

Julie 01634 364309.

September 11th – Caring for Carer’s – Pop-In, 10.00am –  
12noon, St. Paul’s Church, Parkwood, chat over a tea/  
coffee & cake, For further information please contact

Maureen Cannon 01634 235723

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, Ring 07816 159 668

or see www.eastmedwayu3a

September 12th – Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm, Village Hall,  
Alan Jarrett Talk ‘Wildlife & Estuaries’, details

ring Pam Ormiston 01634 365789

September 12th – All Saints Women’s Fellowship,  
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Queen Elizabeth II -

Dean Caston, for details Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

September 13th – Hempstead Leisure Club, Musical  
Exercise with Janet Whiffen (see 6th Sept)

September 13th – Wigmore Thursday Club, ‘Two in  
Harmony’-Sue Burrows & Roger Isaacs, (see 6th Sept).

September 13.14.15.20.21.22 – The Merry Widower by  
Johnnie Mortimer, Oast House Theatre, Rainham,

Curtain up 8.00pm, Box Office on 0844 8793224 or  
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

September 14th – Gillingham & Rainham Local History  
Society, Twydall Evangelical Church, 56/58 Goudhurst

Road ME8 6LQ 2.30 – 4.30pm. WW1 and the ordinary  
soldier...An entertaining talk by John Short. Tea/coffee

available subs £20, Visitors £3 per meeting. Details Val  
Barrand 07947 583327 email lupusrufus@sky.com

September 14th – Mid-Kent Astronomical Soc, Habitable  
Zones around Stars; Rebecca Whentringhame, 8.00pm,

Bredhurst Village Hall, See www.bredhurstvhall.co.uk  
or ring 07969 878211 for more information

Saturday 15th September – Rainham South Councillors  
surgery at Cafe 3:16 Parkwood 10.00am – 12noon. No

appointment necessary.

September 15th – Human Rights Event, Sunlight Centre,  
Richmond Road Gillingham ME7 1LX 10.00am –

1.00pm, Led by Dr Ingrid van Dooren, Entrance Free,  
details mivandooren@hotmail.com or visit

September 15th – Chatham Grammar Association  
Reunion Lunch from 11.30am, contact Claire Stone

clairemariestone@hotmail.com for tickets.

September 15th – Show Day, Rainham Horticultural  
Society, St Margaret’s Millennium Centre, 2.00 –

4.00pm, details 01634 366276.

September 15th – Upchurch Horticultural Society  
September Show in the Barn to the rear of 97 Chaffes

Lane. 2.00pm, parking, refreshments, raffle

September 15th – Family Charity Quiz Night, Wigmore  
Residents Association, St Matthews Community Hall,

Drewery Drive 7.30pm start. Tickets £6 adult / £3 child  
(8-16 years). Tables of 8 (friends/family or join others

on night). Contact Jackie Rouse 01634 233708

September 16th – Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,  
Leisurely circular walk 6 miles / 9.7km finish 1.15pm.

Park Fenn Bell Car Park or nearby ME3 8RF, circular  
walk – Bring picnic – pub at end. Contact: Ray, 01634

315967, raycolinashby@outlook.com

September 16th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, Meet Mo Fleisig 07976 600393, Northwood

Hill Nature Reserve, High Halstow GR 782757 ME3  
8TQ for 6 mile easy flat walk across. No Dogs

Continued on Page 11

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**ART EXHIBITION**  
Paintings by local Artists Clive Bass & John Gilson  
on show and For Sale in Walderslade Village  
Library Walderslade Centre, Chatham between  
1st & 29th September during normal opening hours.

**ART EXHIBITION BY LOCAL ARTIST**  
September 3rd - 29th  
Wynne Prescott Dip SBA presents  
'Back to Nature' Watercolours of  
Flowers, Plants, Birds and Butterflies  
Rainham Library during normal opening hours  
All work is for sale at reasonable prices  
For more information ring 01634 312387

**WILL ADAMS FESTIVAL**  
Saturday 8th September, 11.00am - 4.30pm  
Gillingham Park, Free entry.  
Celebrating the life of Will Adams, who grew up in  
Gillingham before joining the Royal Navy.  
Dogs welcome kept on leads.

**HONEY SHOW**  
Medway Beekeepers Association  
Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th September  
Elmcourt Garden Centre  
Capstone Road, Gillingham ME7 3JQ  
during normal garden centre opening hours.  
Meet local beekeepers and see our products,  
both on the show bench and for sale.  
If you want to find-out more about us visit our  
website at Medway Beekeepers association.

**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  
Entry free, refreshments available.  
Details contact Thelma Dudley 01795 842711 or  
newingtonhistorygroup@outlook.com.

**CARING FOR CARER'S - POP-IN**  
Are you caring for someone old or young?  
Tuesday 11th September, 10.00am - 12noon  
St. Paul's Church, Parkwood chat over a tea/coffee  
& cake Contact Maureen Cannon 01634 235723

**SHOW DAY Rainham Horticultural Society**  
Saturday September 15th, 2.00 - 4.00  
St Margaret's Millennium Centre.  
New members welcome  
Details from 01634 366276.

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**OAST HOUSE THEATRE, RAINHAM**  
The Merry Widower by Johnnie Mortimer  
September 13.14.15.20.21.22  
Curtain up at 8.00pm

As her family struggle to come to terms with her  
Alzheimer's, Irene's past passion for romantic  
literature blurs with reality. She spends hours  
discussing how best to write her 'memory book'  
with her imaginary friend and favourite  
author Barbara Cartland (the deceased world famous  
romantic novelist), disclosing long kept family  
secrets that she would never divulge to her  
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**REUNION LUNCH**  
Chatham Grammar Association (CGSG)  
invite all past students and teachers on  
Saturday 15th September 2018.  
School open from 11.30am, drinks 12.30pm in the  
Technology Block. Members tickets £24 pp  
Non-Members or Guests £26 pp  
Buy your tickets by cheque and bank transfer, no  
cash payments. Bank on Facebook page (Chatham  
Grammar Association) Alternatively, contact  
Claire Stone clairemariestone@hotmail.com

**FAMILY CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT**  
Saturday September 15th, 7pm for 7.30 start.  
Wigmore Residents Association  
St Matthews Church & Community Hall  
Drewery Drive, Wigmore  
Tickets: £6 per adult / £3 per child (8-16 years).  
Tables of 8 (friends/family or join others on night).  
Contact Jackie Rouse 01634 233708

**'IN FLANDERS FIELDS'**  
Saturday 22nd September, 8.00pm  
St Matthews Community Centre, Wigmore  
Wigmore Voices are proud to commemorate the  
centenary of the end of World War I.  
Licensed bar available  
Tickets £7 from Sue 01634 370639.

**SILENT AUCTION**  
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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR AUGUST

Last August I visited a location characterised by sea walls, ochre sails, sea birds, common seals, sea lavender and wide-open skies. I set off east along Watling Street and, just before Faversham, turned left for Oare. I motored slowly through the dark and ancient Bysing Wood, composed mostly of massive oak trees and coppiced sweet chestnut, and fields of wheat and maize, before eventually dropping down to sea level upon reaching Oare Marshes. The latter have been developed into a nature reserve for waders and other birds by Kent Wildlife Trust. I stopped temporarily at a large layby from which I had very good views of avocet, lapwing, knot, dunlin and bar tailed godwit, the latter of which were likely to be passage migrants. I parked at the car park proper and then climbed up the sea wall, beyond which is The Swale and the Isle of Harty. The day was warm and sunny, with little or no wind, and a blue sky in which were large, fluffy clouds. Anchored in the low tidal waters of The Swale were three Thames sailing barges, their ochre sails furled up. I set off along the embankment in the direction of Whitstable. On the landward side of the footpath were small numbers of swallows and swifts flying low over the reserve in pursuit of flies. On both sides of the path were flowers such as wild carrot, fleabane, red clover and birds foot trefoil. By the time that I arrived at the bird watching hide facing down The Swale, I had noted butterflies such as gatekeeper, common blue, meadow brown and the summer migrant painted lady. From inside the hide I noted a couple of oyster catchers and redshanks probing for food in the mud of The Swale. More interestingly, I picked out, with my binoculars, a group of seals on the edge of Horse Sands in the middle of The Swale. I asked a man who had his telescope clearly trained on the seals, how many there were and he said 'about twenty'. One of the lady ramblers in the hide plucked up courage to ask the man if she and her friends could have a look and was told that they could. Before you could say 'The Wandsworth and District Ladies Walking Club', for

that is who they were, the ramblers eating outside on the bench and the embankment were forming an orderly queue, as ladies are apt to do, to see the seals. Common seals give birth to a single pup in June or July of each year. The pups are very well developed at birth and can crawl, dive and swim when just a few hours old. This enables common seals to breed in estuaries where sand banks are exposed at only part of the day, as is the case with Horse Sands. Soon after breeding, common seals undergo the annual moult of their fur, during which they spend most of the time ashore. The adult seals seen last year on Horse Sands may well have been moulting. One can get quite near to the Sands by walking along the south bank of The Swale from near to The Sportsman Public House at Seasalter.

After stepping out of the hide, I stopped for a while to admire the view. One can see part of the Isle of Sheppey, including Shell Ness at the eastern tip of the island; Whitstable; the skyline of Faversham, including the spire of the parish church and Shepherd Neame's Brewery; and the nearby Shipwright's Arms with adjoining Boat Shed at Hollow Shore on the Ham Marshes. The latter marshes are surrounded on three sides by Oare and Faversham Creeks. Ham Marshes are just one of three in the Faversham area which were won from the sea in mediaeval times and which are still grazed by cattle. The others are Luddenham Marshes and the Seasalter Levels. I walked up Oare Creek as far as the public house on the opposite bank. Those parts of the creek on the highest ground, immediately under the embankments, were lined with sea lavender, sea aster, sea wormwood and golden samphire, among the more common sea purslane. The Shipwright's was a matter of yards away as the black tailed godwit flies but, for natural history correspondents, it is the distance of driving into Faversham and then out again. Two herds of cattle were grazing on Ham Marshes at the time of my visit. A massive stack of round bales of hay had been gathered in for the feeding of the cattle, under cover, during the winter months. Wild carrot, hog weed and thistle (all rank weeds and a nuisance to farmers) lined the track to the public house, which is sheltered from

the north wind by a clump of damson trees growing on part of the embankment. House sparrows were chirping away in the trees. A sail maker now occupies the old boat shed and, at the time of my visit, the Thames sailing barge, 'Lady Pamela', was hauled up on the bank and was under repair. The Shipwright's Arms is in an 18th century building and proudly claims to be an old fashioned, country pub. Around the walls are model boats, ships' lights and photos and paintings of Thames sailing barges. I had a massive ploughman's lunch, far more elaborate than was ever taken into the stubble fields by a ploughman. I had sat down on a seat next to a ginger tom, who has little affinity with strangers, and who was curled up on a red cushion. It occurred to me that, in the past, the pub's customers would have been mainly working men - those building, repairing or crewing sailing barges and farm labourers. Hollow Shore is a living connection with the time when ochre sails were a common sight, moving slowly through the north Kent marshes. Those sails were trimmed, and the barges crewed, by just one man, a boy and a dog.

Joe Ennis

## PLATFORM ZERO RAINHAM STATION

In May, rail passengers were faced with major changes to train times affecting the entire Southeastern network. Their spokesman said: 'There'll be more frequent services and new journey opportunities from many stations. We'll be doubling the capacity on some high speed services, and we've worked closely with Govia Thameslink Railway to integrate their new Thameslink services into the timetable.' There were rumours of being able to travel by train direct from Rainham to Luton Airport - but not immediately. Although no actual copies were available, the booking clerk kindly printed off for me a copy of the projected timetable. This showed that the new Thameslink service would enable passengers to travel to places like Woolwich, Greenwich and London Bridge (though not Charing Cross) without having to change at Gillingham. The complete journey to Luton would take just under 2½ hours. So, providing your flight from Luton Airport was at a civilised hour, you could dispense with the car.... The new service was planned to start on May 20th, but by the end of May trains using Rainham's new platform 0 (Platform Zero rather than Platform Nought, please) were still few and far between, mainly

because Govia Thameslink had not had time to train sufficient drivers to cover the new route. The unfortunate company's plans to improve its services on other parts of its network also ran into difficulties, as the Press was eager to point out. Since then things have improved considerably, with a regular, roughly hourly, service and additional trains during rush hour. The trains themselves are the new 700 class 'see-through' type, with doors between carriages permanently open. Designed for commuters, the seats are functional rather than comfortable, and there's plenty of space for 'standees', as local bus companies describe standing passengers. But unless you've booked a 1st class ticket, don't expect to be able to plug in your laptop, or to benefit from even a fold-down table.

RAID

## JAZZ GIG

Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham. Friday 21st September, 8.00pm.

Alan Barnes/Steve Waterman All Stars.

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## A MURDER MYSTERY by Alternate Shadows

Saturday 22nd September, 7.00 for 7.30pm start Newington Village Hall ME9 7JJ

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## BARNARDO'S CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 29th September, 7pm for 7.30pm start

Twydall Church Hall Gillingham

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Holywell School, Forge Lane, Upchurch ME9 7AE.

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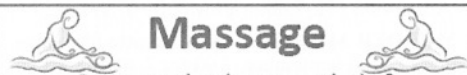
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## Diary 2018

September 17th - Wigmore WI, 7.30pm, St Matthews  
Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Visitors Welcome,  
interested contact Chris Ellison 01634 372976 or  
Barbara Strachan 01634 268611

September 17th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St  
Paul's Church, Parkwood, 7.30pm, My Life as a  
Couture Dressmaker, Mrs Sue Hollings, All welcome,  
ring Kate Archer 01634 360797.

September 18th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Hot, hot, hot' -  
a parallel arrangement using hot colours, (see 4th Sept).

September 18th - RSPB Medway Local Group Illustrated  
Talk, Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, ME8  
9PN, 7.30 - 9.45 pm £4 Birds of the Russian Far East -  
Chris Collins see www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

September 19th - 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

September 19th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Village Hall,  
7.30pm, Annual General Meeting, Lesley Wainwright -  
Title: Visual Quiz, Potato Competition, New members  
always welcome ring 07791 781 910 for details

September 20th - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 -  
4.00pm. Working in Wardrobe, Wakeley Hall, Oast  
House Community Centre, Rainham. Visitors welcome  
small entry charge. Ring 01634 366276 for details.

September 20th - Wigmore Thursday Club, 'A History of  
State Surveillance' - Geoff Beer, (see 6th Sept).

September 20th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Board Games,  
tea and chat (see 6th Sept)

September 21st - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club,  
Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.00pm, Alan Barnes/  
Steve Waterman All Stars, Entry £12, 07544 312743

September 22nd - Murder Mystery performed by  
Alternate Shadows, Newington Village Hall ME9 7JJ,  
7.30pm start, Tickets £6 pp, BYO Drinks and Nibbles,  
Mike 01634 360906 mikew16@blueyonder.co.uk

September 22nd - 'In Flanders Fields' St Matthews  
Community Centre, Wigmore, 8.00pm, an evening full  
of fun, drama and songs. Forties dress is optional,  
licensed bar. Tickets £7 from Sue 01634 370639.

September 22nd - Medway Folk Dance Club, (8th Sept).

September 23rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,

Leisurely circular walk 5.5 miles / 8.8km finish 1.00pm  
Meet Newington village hall carpark, ME9 7JJ,  
TQ861647 walk may be very muddy if wet. Bring  
picnic Contact: Heather, 07887 750881

September 23rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, Meet Patricia Daniels 07960 295164 Text  
Only Charing School Road GR 953496 TN27 0JN for 6  
mile walk, possibly muddy, some stiles, steps. No Dogs

September 24th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 10th Sept).

September 26th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, 7.00  
for 7.15pm, Potato Growing Competition Results  
United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road,  
Gillingham ME7 4PU, details Sandie 07962 277330

September 26th - Rainham Historical Society, 7.30pm  
start, Millennium Centre, Rainham, 'A Chiddingstone  
Memoir' part II by Penny Harris, Visitors welcome £2  
per visit, Contact Mrs Olwen O'Dowd 01634 263622

September 26th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,  
Birthday Social, (see 12th Sept).

September 27th - Wigmore Thursday Club, 'History of  
the Hovercraft' - Brian Laverick-Smith, (see 6th Sept).

September 27th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Rug Making  
Demo with Colin Davis (see Sept 6th)

September 28th - Medway Geographical Society, Holy  
Trinity Church, Twydale Lane, 7.30pm, 'Curiosities of  
the City of London' - Stuart Robinson, All welcome,  
Students and Children Free, just come or 01634 572139

September 28th - Is Interstellar Travel feasible? From  
Daedalus to Dan Dare to Daedalus; Prof Alan Aylward,  
Mid-Kent Astronomical Society (see 14th Sept).

September 29th - Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm  
start, Twydale Church Hall Gillingham, Tickets £5,  
Tables of 6-8 Book 01634 233405 bring own drink and  
nibbles, Free Tea Coffee + Biscuits, free parking

September 30th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,  
strenuous circular walk 10 miles / 16.1km estimated  
finish 3.30pm, meet Lodge Lane, Cobham. DA123BS,  
TQ680683, few steep hills, could be muddy. Bring  
picnic lunch for mid-way stop. Contact: John, 07749  
760788, billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk

September 30th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
2.00pm, Meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847  
828249 The Friars Tea Room, Aylesford Priory Car  
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## Diary 2018

October 2nd - Breast Cancer Support Group, A talk on  
and to learn 'Sign Language' (see 4th Sept).

October 2nd - Rainham Horticultural Society, John  
Hughes - House Plants (see 4th Sept).

October 2nd - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Harvest Festival' -  
arrangement incorporating fruit & berries, (4th Sept).

October 3rd - Upchurch Horticulture Society, Planning  
Meeting for October Show, 97 Chaffes Lane, 7.30pm.

October 4th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Board games, tea  
and chat (see Sept 6th)

October 4th - Wigmore Thursday Club, 'Switzerland on a  
Train' - Brian Biggs, (see 6th Sept).

October 6th - Explore Your Streets - Hempstead.  
Medway Archives Centre 32 Bryant Road, Strood,  
11.00am - 3.00pm, celebrate 40 years of shopping at  
the Savacentre, 01634 332714 for more information  
www.medway.gov.uk/archives

October 6th - RiverVoice Community Choir, Free Taster  
Session, 10.00am - 1.00pm St Luke's Methodist  
Church, City Way, Rochester, call Karen Shannon  
01634 309515 or rivervoicchoir@gmail.com

October 6th - Rainham Ladies Choir, Diamond  
Anniversary gala performance, The Woodlands Centre,  
Gillingham. Everyone is welcome (tickets £5)

October 6th - Friends of St Mary's, Upchurch Wine and  
Wisdom fundraising evening, 7.00pm start, Holywell  
School, Forge Lane, Upchurch ME9 7AE. Tickets £5,  
bring your own wine & nibbles. Teams up to 8 players  
book 01634 366113 or lewing135@btinternet.com

October 6th Quiz Night, Hospital Radio Medway, starts  
7.30pm, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Tyndall. Tables of  
6 - 8, £5 per person, bring your own food & nibbles.

Contact Eunice Norman 01634 365300 to book  
October 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,  
Leisurely circular walk 5.6 miles / 9km, finish 1.00pm  
Meet St Martin Church C of E, Station Road, Eynsford,  
park considerably DA4 0EH, TQ540654 Walk the  
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October 7th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am  
meet Roger Norman 01634 232404, 07941 965272  
Marden Village Library Car Park GR 745447 TN12  
9DP or on nearby road for 5 mile very flat walk, no  
slopes & only muddy if wet, 2 stiles, No Dogs

October 8th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 10th Sept).

October 8th - Rainham Flower Club, Practical Evening -  
'By Candlelight' (see 10th Sept).

October 8th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,  
Organist - Brett Wales, (see 10th Sept).

October 8th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship  
Group, (see 10th Sept).

October 10th - East Medway U3A Mike Grillo - Two  
Kinds of Teardrops (the Roy Orbison and Del Shannon  
Story), (see 12th Sept).

October 10th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, U3A -  
Wendy Back, (see 12th Sept).

October 11th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Canterbury  
Cathedral - Lenny Clark, (see 6th Sept).

October 12th - Jazz Gig, The Derek Nash Funk Group,  
(see 21st Sept).

October 13th - Craft Market, (see 8th Sept).

October 13th - An evening with Duncan Norvelle, Oast  
House Theatre, Rainham, Curtain up 8.00pm, Box  
Office 0844 8793224 or www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

October 14th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,  
Leisurely circular walk 5 miles / 8.1km estimated finish  
12.45pm, park considerably around Horsmonden  
village green. TN12 8HT, TQ700405 Bring snack, Pubs  
at end. Undulating pleasant countryside.

October 14th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,  
10.00am, meet Lindsay Floyd / Andy Boorman 07743  
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